WOLF

By

Jim Harrison

Wesley Strick revision 10/6/92

Elaine May revision 11/21/92

WOLF

BY JIM HARRISON

(Wesley Strick revision - October 6, 1992)

(Elaine May revision - November 21, 1992)

[redacted]OL5040

FADE IN ON:

A FULL MOON

the hills and dales of rural vermont covered with snow except for a thin ribbon of black road. In the distance we see a single car approaching.

THE WOODS BESIDE THE ROAD

We watch the car approaching through the trees, panning with it as it passes...until the camera holds on the dark, motionless figures of a pack of wolves.

INT. CAR - WILL AND CHARLOTTE RANDALL

They are a middle aged couple, he somewhat older. He is dressed in an old parka, a wool cap down over his ears. She is dressed in a smart suit and a sleek fur coat.

CHARLOTTE
Is this the way to the airport?
(he does not answer)
I don't see any signs.

WILL
(patiently)
We passed a sign a few miles back. Relax, Charlotte. You'll make your plane.

CHARLOTTE
Oh, please don't use that tone.

WILL
I'm not using any "tone". This is my normal voice. I'm sorry if it annoys you.
(a pause)
You're mad.

CHARLOTTE
I'm not mad.
(a pause)
But I <u>do</u> resent the fact that you treat my job as if it were a hobby.

WILL
<u>I</u> treat your job...?...

CHARLOTTE
...as if it were a <u>hobby</u>. I <u>am</u> a contributing editor to one of the largest...

WILL
I have <u>never</u>...

CHARLOTTE
...magazine sections in the East...

WILL
...treated your job....

CHARLOTTE
...and they have assigned me this interview. I have to do it. The man won a Nobel in nuclear medicine.

WILL
And I planned this weekend. Not, I grant you, an exact parallel in terms of intellectual effort, but it took a hell of a lot of work and scheduling. I mean, it's not a great time for me to leave town either. I don't even know if I'll have a job when I get back. But I did, actually, shift everything around so we could come here together and now, amusingly enough, you're leaving.

CHARLOTTE
(a pause)
I can't ski with you anyway. I wait all day for apres ski and it never comes.

WUL5048

WILL
They don't have apres ski in Vermont. We would have to go to Aspen.

CHARLOTTE
(helplessly)
Oh, Will.
(a moment)
Alright. Here's my pledge. Next month we'll go skiing in Aspen.

WILL
If I'm not on unemployment.

CHARLOTTE
They're not going to fire you. Your name has too much prestige and you bring in too many writers.
(he slumps)
And don't go into a depression. If you're staying, at least, tomorrow, ski. There's no sense being here if you're going to lie on your back watching crap on TV all day.

WILL
You know me too well to live.

She smiles, he grins. She suddenly points to an exit sign ahead that says "Airport" and he turns off the road.

INT. AIRPORT - EVENING

Will and Charlotte at her gate.

[redacted] (CHARLOTTE)
See you in the city.

WILL
Fly safely.

He kisses her cheek, she kisses his...then joins the line of passengers boarding.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - WILL

walks back to the parking lot. And pauses at an airport bar called, appropriately, The Fogged Inn.

INT. "FOGGED INN" - WILL

takes a stool at the otherwise empty bar.

WILL
Double scotch, please, no ice.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT (LATER)

Will's car again, alone on the road, lit by the magnificent moon. Now Will reaches a fork, slows, decides, and bears right ...

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Will squints, looking for landmarks but nothing seems familiar. He mutters a curse, stops, does an awkward "k-turn" and starts to head back while feeling for the map in the pocket of his door, then...

...there is a sickening thud. He's hit something! Startled, he slams on the brakes....then, hesitantly, opens the car door, almost afraid to see what he's struck.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Will crouches in front of the headlights, sickened to find a large, furry animal lying here on its side, fur slick with blood. He gingerly touches it and it <u>moves</u>.

Will gasps, as the animal raises up slightly and he sees what it is: a wolf. Noble and dying, the distinctive yellow

eyes quickly dimming. Bereft, Will reaches out to gently pat its head ...

...and the wolf turns and looks at him, it's yellow eyes glittering in the headlights. Then, almost languidly, it raises it's head, teeth bared, and bites him on the wrist. Will cries out and the wolf falls back and dies, blood issuing, dark and thick, from it's throat.

Will stands frozen, staring at the dead beast and then at his punctured wrist. The wound is not deep, is not even bleeding much, but he suddenly shudders violently, his breathing loud and harsh in the empty silence. He fights off a wave of dizziness, then leans down and grabs hold of the wolf's carcass by the hind legs.

He drags it off the road with some difficultly. It is heavy, thickly furred, oddly massive for a wolf. Will manages to pull the dead beast into the edge of the wood leaving a dark trail of the wolf's blood in the snow.

Now he starts to dig a shallow grave, for the wolf--first with his heel, then with his bare hands. He works, quickly, intently...and then pauses and turns slowly to look behind him, as if aware of some a presence, but there is nothing. He rises and peers into the wood. He sees:

Eyes. Yellow and glimmering in the moonlight, studying him, motionless. Will begins backing away...then turns and suddenly bolts for the rental car.

He climbs in, starts it up, and races off into the night. As his taillights fade, we HEAR a long, distant HOWL from deep in the woods.

WOL5048

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. UNION SQUARE NORTH - NOON (NEXT DAY)

The clamor of JACKHAMERS signals a return to New York City, under perpetual, pointless construction.

Will walks into the "MacLeish House" building, getting a facelift, half-hidden under scaffolding. Three LABORERS shout at each other, each in his own language: Portuguese, Rumanian, Swahili. Nobody understands anybody else ...

INT. WILL'S OUTER OFFICE - MORNING

Manuscripts piled on shelves. A shabby loveseat for visitors. Will walks past MARY, his assistant.

WILL
Good morning, Mary. I trust you behaved last night.

He's at the coffee maker filling up.

MARY
Of course, sir. A cup of hot milk is thrill enough for me.

WILL
Good. Then you may have some coffee.
(he pours her a cup)

MARY
Thank you. And Maude Waggins is waiting in your office.

He puts the coffee cup down in front of her with a sigh and starts for his office.

MARY
What happened to your wrist?

WILL
A wolf bit me.

MARY
I didn't mean to pry.

INT. WILL'S INNER OFFICE - SAME

Functional, staid, with windows that look south, across 50th street. Books are crammed onto the shelves and stacked in little piles on the floor. The only other decoration is a large, beautiful old map that hangs near the desk. Leaning against the wall is a corkboard with just one prospective bookjacket for a novel titled Mozart In Paris, by Maude Waggins.

Maude Waggins herself, a striking and intense woman pushing seventy, springs to her feet as Will enters.

MAUDE
Will, I've heard a terrible, terrible rumor. Is it true?

WILL
(mildly)
I have to know what it is first, Maude.

MAUDE
I've heard that MacLeish House is going to be taken over by Raymond Alden.

WILL
Yes, it's true. Sit down, Maude.

MAUDE
I can't. I'm too upset. I cannot [illegible] for a conglomerate. You'll have to protect me, Will.

WILL
Well, first of all, Raymond Alden isn't a conglomerate. He's just an ordinary Ross Perot billionaire. And second of all, I'm not sure I'm going to be here after the takeover.

MAUDE
WHAT! What are you talking about! You're the senior editor...you're name, you're reputation...

WILL
My reputation has been in question since I told Judith Kranz that no semi-literate fourteen year old would read her fiction...

MAUDE
It shows your integrity.

WILL
It shows that I have no idea what semi-literates read. Believe me, if I knew she'd turn out ten best sellers in a row I'd have snapped her up.

MAUDE WCL5048
Oh, bullshit.

WILL
Sit down, Maude. If only so that I don't have to stand.

MAUDE
(her eyes moistening)
You're the last gentleman, Will.
(she sits; he sits)

WILL
The good news is that I have an ace in the hole. The head of marketing, Stewart Swinton, is my protege and if I leave he says he'll leave with me. And I know they won't want to lose him.

MAUDE
You have two aces in the hole. I'll leave with you, too.
(she rises; he rises)
Let's go meet the other ace.

INT. STEWART'S OFFICE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Somewhat brighter (wi[illegible]ws face Union Square Park) and

spiffier. A series of Robert Weil posters hang on one wall. A Ficus blooms near the window.

STEWART is in his late 30's and boyishly handsome. He huddles with several production people.

STEWART
This is an event book, it's got to have heft. The fact that it's only a hundred and two pages long is a problem, yes, but not insurmountable--or God wouldn't have made heavy paper, wide margins, and font size for the legally blind...
(he sees Will and Maude; to the team)
Now go--do what you do. And think heft.

As they file out he steps forward smiling, hand extended.

STEWART
Maude Waggins ..?

MAUDE
(surprised)
Do I know you?

STEWART
Not yet, but you saved my life, twice. First, upon reading What About Us Grils? my freshman year at Yale--

MAUDE
--you realized you "had to write."

[redacted] (STEWART)
I realized I had to stop writing. The second time was after college, I was about to follow some girl out to the Coast when I caught you on WBAI, reading your ode to L.A. How did you describe the city? "Sprawled, insensate, stoned/a hustler flat on his back, getting blown."

MAUDE
(smiles)
Yes.

STEWART
I adore you.
(he kisses her hand)

WILL
I taught him to do that.

STEWART
Yes, until I met Will I used to punch my authors on the side of the head.

WILL
Stewart, Maude wants to come with us if we leave. Would you know offhand what her contract calls for?

STEWART
Uh...she's obligated to one more book, then we get a first look at her next two.

MAUDE
One more book? But nothing specified as to type, length...

STEWART
Well...no.

MAUDE
Then there's nothing to stop me from turning in a charming 80 page reminiscence of all the restaurants I've loved.

STEWART WOL5048
Nothing.

MAUDE
Perfect. I'll start now. And finish it in a week.
(she takes Stewart's hand in hers)
You are a rarity, Mr. Swinton - a loyal man with great taste in authors.

She sails out. Stewart bows deeply until the door closes.

WILL
You are such a polished ass kisser it takes my breath away.

STEWART
Thank you. I feel humble.
(as Will starts out)
See you at the Alden's bash tonight...and be nice to him, huh? Just in case he's undecided about you.

WILL
The ass kisser speaks.

STEWART
Hey--I kiss 'em like I see 'em.

INT. WILL'S OFFICE - SAME

Mary sits with ROY PRAWL, a frail, cheerful young man. Will enters, takes off his glasses, rubs his eyes and pours some coffee.

WILL
Have some coffee, Roy. Mary, what time is my doctor's appointment?

MARY
I had no idea you had one.
(she picks up the phone)

ROY
(taking the coffee)
Are you sick?

WILL
No. I was bitten by a wolf.

ROY
Hey--just asked. You going to Alden's party tonight?

WILL
Probably.

ROY
Don't you think that's a little...Roman? to invite everybody to your house in order to tell them whether or not they still have a job?

MARY
(hanging up)
You have no doctor's appointment but the doctor says he'll see you if you come now.

WILL
(rising heavily)
On my way.

ROY
Will...what I came in to say is...if you get the axe tonight I go with you.

MARY
And so do I.

WILL
(he turns, slowly)
Now, listen. It's one thing for Stewart Swinton to quit with me. He's had offers from other houses. And he's an executive-- you're not. You need your paychecks. I forbid you, I FORBID you, to take any action if I'm fired.
(to Mary)
I'll be back in an hour. Where are my glasses?

MARY
In your hand.

WILL
(with dignity)
Thank you.

He walks out.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

we start CLOSE on a syringe in Will's shoulder, as we HEAR:

DOCTOR
A wolf? In vermont? I don't think so, Will.

WOL5048

(WILL)
But you weren't there, Ralph.

WIDER on Will's doctor (RALPH), mid-fifties, west side office...as he examines, then cleans out, then redresses will's bite.

DOCTOR
Sure it wasn't a Husky or a King Shepherd? This was night, right? Dark out?

WILL
Full moon. And to answer your question--it was a wolf. I stared right at him. You can't confuse a dog with a wolf. That's like confusing Madonna with Marlene Dietrich, that's like...

The Doctor sticks a thermometer into Will's mouth.

DOCTOR
I get your point. You know, it's funny. This isn't the only rabies shot I've given in the last few months. My wife's sister-in- law, up in Oneanta... A raccoon actually

(MORE)

DOCTOR (cont'd)
chased her onto her porch and bit her on the ass. And out on Long Island, last summer, a friend of a friend's son...sustained brain damage from a snake bite. He was just sitting by the pool, and next thing...brain damage.

He takes out the thermometer, reads it: normal.

WILL
I think I saw that movie. It starred Richard Denning and Barbara Rush. With Kent Smith as the troubled scientist.
(the Doctor sighs)
Come on, Ralph, you just made all that up to make me feel lucky.

DOCTOR
You are lucky. Till recently we had to give these shots directly into the stomach muscle. Right about now I'd be scraping you off the ceiling instead of listening to you make fun of a fine doctor. Get your shirt back on and tell Donna to give you an appointment in three days for your next shot.

Will gets off the exam table. As he reaches for his shirt, the Doctor assesses his physique.

DOCTOR
You exercising at all?

Will grins, taps his temple with an index finger.

WILL
(buttoning his shirt)
My mind, Ralph, my mind.

DOCTOR
Good. You'll be the smartest guy in ICU after the bypass. How's Charlotte?

WILL
Better than both of us.

DOCTOR
Well, send her my love.

Will agrees, with a wistful smile:

WILL
If I see her.

EXT. ALDEN ESTATE - THAT EVENING

An impressive estate off the Hudson, guarded by a stone wall. Will and Charlotte drive up to the gated main entrance and stop near the small guard house.

The guard steps out and Will hands him his invitation. The guard checks it against a guest list.

GUARD
I don't see a Wendel here.

WILL
Try Randall.

GUARD
Oh... Here we go. Sorry about that.

WILL
Nah. I'm surprised you can see at all after checking this many invitations.

GUARD
Well...
(he shrugs)
Go right in, Mr. Randall.

Will gives a little wave and drives in.

INT. CAR - WILL, CHARLOTTE

WOL5048

CHARLOTTE
Must you make friends with everyone who earns under 30 thousand a year.

WILL
Don't be a snob, Charlotte. That guard probably earns more than you do.

EXT. ALDEN ESTATE - AS WILL'S CAR DRIVES THROUGH

There is a grandly scaled main house surrounded by guest cottages, staff quarters and a stable and bounded by acres of thick woods.

OVER the SHOT we HEAR the babble of voices...and the CAMERA moves in toward the house.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - GUESTS

standing in little knots, chatting. Waiters circulate with trays of canapes. The CAMERA moves past the various groups, picking up snatches of conversation.

FIRST GROUP:

A MAN
...You can't get burned with a Matisse. You can't get burned with a Degas. But you can get killed with a Warhol...

SECOND GROUP:

A WOMAN
I thought, not another Holocaust book. But it's selling, it's selling...

A MAN
Is Alden anywhere?

The woman shifts her eyes to a THIRD GROUP where ALDEN stands chatting with guests. The CAMERA follows her glance.

ALDEN'S GROUP:

A MAN
...I do not think of Time-Warner as another giant, multinational media conglomerate, but as a bunch of decent, caring people. Because I just don't believe money always implies ruthless ambition.
(to Alden)
Am I insane?

ALDEN
I would say so.

IN THE VERY NEXT GROUP are Will, Stewart, Charlotte and several other guests. Their eyes keep darting over to Alden.

WOMAN
...so, supposedly, because the rain forest is being destroyed so rapidly--oh, these little smoked things are delicious--all these new viruses are going to colonize throughout the world and destroy vast segmemts of the population. I'm only quoting the The New Yorker, you understand.

A MAN
Every upscale magazine tries to make a case that the world will end if we have no rain forests. It's such an elitist idea.

WILL
You could make a case that the world has aready ended.
(Charlotte stiffens)
Certainly that art is dead, that the death of the six million Jews marked the end of art. That no metaphor, nothing of the imagination could ever again compete with that. So now instead of art we have daytime TV. Moral questions are discussed among ever more outre groups. Gay senior citizens, women who've been raped by their janitor confiding in Oprah. There is no music, there's no painting, there's very little writing. The only living field is physics.

There is a long silence.

CHARLOTTE
This is usually when I throw the cream pie. But you'll have to imagine it tonight.

A WOMAN
(To Will; still stunned)
There's no music?

WUL5048

A MAN
(suddenly)
Well, time to fill up the glass.

There are cries of "Yes!"..."Time for another drink!" from the other members of the group as they disperse...leaving Charlotte and Stewart and Will alone.

CHARLOTTE
Nice work, darling. And done in half your usual time.

STEWART
(sighing)
Will, Will...

THE DINING ROOM - LATER

The guests are just finishing desert. Stewart, Will and Charlotte are at one table.

STEWART
Great cream pie.

CHARLOTTE
Sure. Now.

WILL
I wonder if he's fired anyone yet. How many people from MacLeish House are here?

A young man in a Tuxedo stops by their table.

MAN
(to Will)
Mr. Alden would like to see you outside by the fountain, sir. Whenever you're ready.
(he moves away)

WILL
(throwing down his napkin)
This is it.

CHARLOTTE
Now, Will, just remember who you are...

STEWART
And just charm the bastard. You can be charming when you want to.

WILL
Oh, God. Why is he doing it this way.

STEWART
He--I know this sounds nuts--but he probably think it's kinder face to face.

EXT. THE ESTATE - NIGHT

as Will walks along the path. VARIOUS GROUPS of GUESTS are now trailing out of the house, strolling along the paths. Will stops at the fountain, tense and uncomfortable, and then begins gnawing at the bandage on his wrist.

Alden, who stands talking to a little cluster of people, sees Will, bows to the group and walks over.

ALDEN
Good to see you again, Will. Shall we walk?

ANGLE - WILL, ALDEN - STROLLING

along a path intersecting great swatches of velvet lawn.

ALDEN
Interested in horses, Will?

WILL
Yes! Yes, indeed. They're my favorite.... Actually, no, I'm not, Mr. Alden.

ALDEN
I didn't think so. You don't look like a horse man. Ever seen a race horse close up?

WILL
I've never seen a race.

ALDEN
Well, in a moment you will see the fastest Derby winner of all time after Secretariat and Northern Dancer. A mile in two minutes, one tenth of a second.

WILL
Very impressive.

WOL5048

ALDEN
Yes. Cigar?
(Will holds up a hand; Alden lights his)
I want you to think about Europe, Will--Eastern Europe, particularly. A whole new market is opening up there. I think, God and currency willing, the entire continent will eventually cohere, not just economically but culturally. I want that to be <u>your</u> area.

WILL
I see.
(a beat)
Then my area will no longer be...acting editor-in-chief of Macleish House after the takeover.

ALDEN
That's right. But I hope you'll stay with us in this new capacity. It's very rough in publishing right now. Even Maude Waggins name won't be enough to open any real doors.

WILL
(stopping)
What do you mean? Did Maude call you?

ALDEN
(smoothly)
No, no. But you've been her editor for 20 years. I'm assuming she'll want to leave with you.

WILL
I've been the editor for quite a few authors for 20 years.

ALDEN
Well, I'm sure many of them will want to leave with you, too.

They stop in front of an enormous, well kept stable.

ALDEN
It's nothing personal, you understand. You're clearly a man of taste and individuality, which I prize. But this is a time--not just in corporate america but around the globe - where taste and individuality are actually something of a handicap.

WILL
Just out of curiousity--on what basis did you pick my replacement? Vulgarity and conformity?

ALDEN
Drive. On the basis of hustle and drive and 52 carat ambition. He nagged me night and day until I gave him your job.

Silence. Then...

WILL
Well...for what it's worth... here's everything I've learned in 30 years. Pay reasonable advances, never stint on review copies, and treat the authors like human beings. Don't hold them to deadlines, they'll hand in rough drafts.

ALDEN
Thanks. I'll remember that. You're a nice person, Will. Thank God I replaced you. And...I hope you decide to give Eastern Europe a shot.

He claps a hand on Will's shoulder and they walk into the stable.

INT. THE STABLE - NIGHT

There is a small, admiring crowd already in sight surrounding a magnificent stallion. In the remaining stalls are seven other horses.

A MAN
That is male beauty. I'm selling my Soloflex.

A GROOM stands by as Alden proprietorially strokes the plush mane of the stallion.

ALDEN
This is Fort Knox. He looks a lot like Northern Dancer, doesn't he?

Everyone ad libs agreement. "Exactly!"... "Identical!"... "He could be Northern Dancer"...until their attention begins to shift to the seven other horses, who have begun to snort and shy in their stalls.

It is clearly Will's approach that is disturbing them. Will, nonplused, turns to the gaping crowd.

WILL
Excuse me, excuse me, they smell a socialist. I'll leave.

He begins backing out of the stable. As he passes Fort Knox, the stallion snorts and rears.

WOL5048

EXT, STABLEYARD - NIGHT

Will stumbles out, then suddenly he begins to tremble. He puts his hands quickly in his pockets and begins to walk... then stops and leans against a post, his breathing loud and harsh, his face covered with sweat.

WILL
Oh, God...

A glass comes abruptly in front of his face. A woman's voice (LAURA) says:

LAURA
Drink it.

He takes the glass without turning, his hand trembling so that some of the liquid sloshes down the side, and gulps it, gasping as the alcohol burns his mouth.

LAURA
Good boy. Now give me the glass and sit down. Just sit on the grass. That's fine.

He hands her the glass with a still trembling hand and kneels in the grass. She moves behind him and presses the

balls of her thumbs into the flesh at the base of his neck. He jumps.

LAURA
Pain snaps you right out of it, doesn't it.
(she digs in again)
Best antidote for old pain that I know - new pain.
(she presses her thumbs against either side of his jaw)
Now breathe to my count. Exactly. Five counts inhale. Five counts exhale... ready? One-two-three-four...

He obeys her like a child, breathing as she counts...until he is no longer trembling and his breathing is normal again. He looks over at her.

WILL
Well, I...I don't know how to thank you. I'm afraid I've finished your drink.

LAURA
(she stares at him)
What are you - the last civilized man?

WILL
I'm just...embarrassed.

LAURA
(after a moment)
I had a breakdown when I was twenty-five, I was in a dry-out clinic when I was twenty-two, when I was seventeen I smoked, popped pills and dropped acid as a full time hobby. So your little anxiety attack barely rouses my interest.

WILL
(gently)
You're very kind.

LAURA
No, I'm not. I'm Laura Alden. Alden is my father.

WILL
(no reaction)
I'm Will Randall.

He holds out his hand. She looks down at it, bemused, then shakes it.

LAURA
Nice to meet you. You're not an easy guy to surprise, are you?

WILL
Not tonight.

LAURA
He just fired you, didn't he?

WILL
Demoted, I think, is the word. I've been given a choice between no job and a job no one would want.

LAURA
So what will you do?

WILL
I'll probably take the job no one would want. I don't have the courage to be jobless at my age.

LAURA
Old guy, huh?

WILL WOL5048
Yes. Old guy.
(he starts to rise)
Well...I'd better get back.

She leaps up as Will rises slowly, unsteadily, to his feet. He staggers and she steadies him. He holds on to her for a moment.

LAURA
Was that on purpose?

WILL
(dropping his arms)
Oh, no. God, no. You're perfectly safe. I'm married.

LAURA
(she stares at him, incredulously)
And that makes you perfectly safe?

WILL
Well...yes.

LAURA
(after a moment)
You better clean up a little if you're going to face the crowd.
(takes the handkerchief from his breast pocket)
Wipe your face. It's all sweaty.

He obediently wipes his face as she goes in back and brushes off his jacket. Then she straightens his tie and smooths down his collar.

LAURA
There you are, dear. All ready for company.

WILL
Thank you.
(he suddenly takes her hand and kisses it)
Thank you. For your good heart.

He turns and starts off. She stares, almost wistfully, after him.

INT. HOUSE

There are fewer people inside now. But among them are Stewart and Charlotte standing in a corner, talking anxiously as Will comes in.

CHARLOTTE
How did it go?

STEWART
Come on! Speak. We've been going nuts.

WILL
(his voice is level)
Well, first let me say...
(to Stewart)
Congratulations on being the new Editor-in-chief.

Stewart blinks, startled:

STEWART
I...what...Alden...said that? What did he say?
(Will says nothing)
It happened this evening, just before the party. He called me and told me that he wanted me to take the job. I said "Will Randall's editor-in-chief". I mean, I didn't even know if he was serious. Look, I didn't ask for this. It just landed in my lap. Say the word and I'll turn it down.
(there is a pause)
What do you think I should do?

WILL
That's up to you, Stewart.

STEWART
No, Will. It's up to you. I'll do whatever you say.

WILL
(carefully)
Well...at your age, and in a publishing house of this stature, it would be foolish not to take this opportunity.

STEWART
Shit. I'm sorry you said that.

INT. VOLVO (MOVING) - NIGHT

Will sits at wheel, tight-lipped and white-knuckled. Charlotte face is flaming with anger.

CHARLOTTE
That son-of-a-bitch! That prick! I had no idea he was offered your job.

WILL
Why would you?

WOL5048

CHARLOTTE
I mean...it was probably hard for him to turn down Alden's offer.... But he could have told you...

WILL
Yes.

CHARLOTTE
Why didn't you say something to him. Why did you let him walk away with your blessing, guilt-free...

WILL
Charlotte, please...
(he clears his throat)
I can't...I can't talk now.

EXT. RANDALL'S BUILDING - NIGHT (LATER)

Charlotte and Will walk into the building, silently. The Doorman steps forward, smiling at Will.

DOORMAN
Good evening, Mr. Randall, Mrs. Randall.

WILL
Good evening, Charlie. You're on late tonight.

DOORMAN
Well...no. It's not even midnight.

WILL
(distractedly)
Good, good.

He walks blindly on as Charlotte follows.

INT. BEDROOM - WILL, CHARLOTTE

as they finish undressing in silence and get into bed.

CHARLOTTE
May I just say one more thing about it? The last thing?

WILL
No.

He snaps off the light.

INT. BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Will makes no move to silence the alarm. With a groan, Charlotte reaches across him to shut it off.

CHARLOTTE
Will ... Come on. It's 7:30.

WILL
(grunts)
Give me till eight...

Charlotte resets the alarm for 8:00, then bolts out of bed.

EXT. TUNDRA - DAY (DREAM)

Blindingly white, this dazzling emptiness... a raw brutal panorama of ice and snow, the wind whining... CHARLOTTE'S VOICE rings out over the shot.

CHARLOTTE'S VOICE
Will!

INT. BEDROOM - WILL

opens his eyes. Charlotte is standing over him. Will turns to the clock: it's now 7:40.

WILL
It's 7:40. I asked you to give me till 8:00...

CHARLOTTE
It's 7:40 at <u>night</u>, you fool!

Will looks out of the window: it's dark.

CHARLOTTE
You've been sleeping all day. Are you alright? How do you feel?

Will pauses, takes stock, then concludes with some surprise:

WILL
I feel good.

INT. SHOWER - WILL

vigorously soaps up, then stops to inspect:

CLOSE - HIS WRIST

The wound seems to be healing nicely. But around it, the hair is thicker. He frowns.

INT. BATHROOM - (5 MINUTES LATER)

Will stands holding a scissors, carefully thinning the strange growth of hair on his wrist.

INT. THE RANDALLS' KITCHEN - NIGHT (LATER)

Will (wrist lightly bandaged) anticly chops vegetables, cubes meat, tosses it all in a cauldron, a culinary dervish... Charlotte, who has changed into a comfortable flannel robe, walks in and sees him. She stares.

CHARLOTTE
Well, what's happened to you? A love affair? Narcotics?

WOL5048

WILL
Both. But that's not all of it. First, I realized that I'm still alive and the world hasn't ended. Second, I realized that if I don't take the Eastern Europe thing I can always teach, I can take time off, I can try to write. But most of all, I realized that it's Mexican Independence Day!

With a little Spanish cry he drops the spatula and launches into a bravura sound pastiche: fireworks, crowds, mariachi...

Charlotte watches him, aghast but amused.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Charlotte is nursing her bowl of beef stew. Will is eating voraciously, ignoring the vegetables and the red wine, and guzzling water. His eyes flick from Charlotte's mouth to the cubes of beef in her bowl.

CHARLOTTE
...so I said "Why assign me mastectomies and new trends in estrogen therapy. Why can't I do the article on genetic engineering and give Pete mastectomies." and he said, "But you'll do it so much better than Pete. You're a woman." so I said, "That's like telling a black food writer she can only write about chitlins..." WILL!

She slaps his hand as he snatches some beef from her bowl, then tosses it in his mouth with amazing accuracy and goes for another. She slaps him again and this time he grabs her hand. Then, suddenly, he's half way across the table and all over her.

CHARLOTTE
(laughing)
WILL!

WILL
Have to catch up. I haven't eaten, haven't drunk, haven't screwed for twenty-four hours.

CHARLOTTE
You haven't screwed for longer than that... Will!

They fall to the floor, Will cushioning Charlotte's impact with a hand jammed hard under her ass. He rolls on top of her.

CHARLOTTE
Hey! No, no, no...not on the kitchen floor. At least let's roll around in a room with a rug.

He wraps his arms around her and kicks off. Together they roll out of the kitchen, Charlotte squealing with laughter.

IN THE LIVING ROOM Will springs up.

WILL
Stay right there.

He goes to the stereo, puts on some classic jazz, then kneels down beside her and tugs her robe open with his teeth.

CHARLOTTE
What else can you do without hands?

He begins softly biting her earlobes, nuzzling her hair... then stops and sits up, blinking. Charlotte watches him.

CHARLOTTE
What?

Will shakes his head--not sure. He looks troubled, puzzled at his own abrupt mood shift.

WILL
I don't know. I smell something.

CHARLOTTE
What?

WILL
Something not...me.

CHARLOTTE
Well, I don't want to intrude on your world but maybe it's me.

WILL
No, it's...it's something else... It's in your hair...

CHARLOTTE
So what? I have hairspray and mousse and smoke and every smell in New York in my hair.

WILL
I know. I just...
(he takes her in his arms)
Where were we?

WOL5048

He kisses her...but it is over.

CHARLOTTE
It's alright. I've got the workshop thing at Yale tomorrow... and I have to get up early to catch the train. Wednesday night? Okay? And I'll wash my hair.

WILL
I'm sorry.

CHARLOTTE
Hey, it happens. Come on, let's go to actual bed.

TIME CUT:

Hours later. Charlotte is asleep. Will is awake, listening to the city's night-sounds, exquisitely alert to very car alarm, siren, shout, every shriek of laughter in the distance.

EXT. SEVENTH AVE. - MORNING

A bright spring day. Will is walking at a healthy clip. He stops at a light and a taxi slows; the driver peers out, inquiringly. Will glances at his watch then shakes his head "No" and walks briskly on.

Pigeons peck around the remains of someone's take-out breakfast lying on the sidewalk. Will suddenly wades into their space as a boy would, waving his arms and laughing as they squawk aloft. Then he pauses, bewildered, as he sees:

IN HIS HAND

He's caught a pigeon, without trying. Will stares at the frightened bird which stares back.

BACK TO SCENE

Will glances around, self-conscious. People are staring, though they haven't slowed down. Will lets go of the bird and it flaps away.

He starts walking again... now falling into step behind a WOMAN in tight Levi's with a perfect ass. Then he catches sight of:

A BUTCHER SHOP WINDOW

Several hanging carcasses capture his attention.

BACK TO WILL

He's stopped and is now gazing with longing at the raw meat. Suddenly, feeling absurd, he forces himself to look away and continues on, downtown.

INT. MACLEISH HOUSE CORRIDOR - NOON

Will steps off the elevator, starts down the hall. He passes a colleague, (GARY) who waves. Will stops, sniffs.

WILL
How the fuck can you drink tequila with breakfast?

GARY
(stunned)
How the fuck did you <u>know</u>?

WILL
Are you kidding? You can smell it a mile away.

He sails on.

INT. WILL'S OUTER OFFICE - SAME

Mary's head shoots up as he enters.

MARY
Oh, Mr. Randall. Are you alright.

WILL
Perfect.

MARY
I heard about Alden's decision and I just...

She breaks off as he stands sniffing.

WILL
Was Stewart just in here?

MARY
Well...not <u>just</u>. About an hour ago. That's how I found out. He said he hoped... Be careful!

Will has opened the window and is now leaning out.

WILL
Smell that air. Foul! Wonderful! Food cooking, sweat, sex, dogshit..
(he closes the window)

MARY
We were worried yesterday when you didn't come in. Where were you?

WILL
I don't know. Someplace cold.
(he starts in)

WOL5048

MARY
No coffee, Mr. Randall?

WILL
Nah.

Mary watches, open-mouthed, as Will bounds into his office.

INT. WILL OFFICE - LATER

He's at his desk, working on a manuscript, his hand flying, energetically crosssing out paragraphs, jotting notes in the margin...

Roy pops the door open, thinks about knocking, then just walks in.

ROY
I just want to say that it sucks.

WILL
(without looking up)
Thank you, Roy.

ROY
And I.. Are you...you're working without your bifocals. What did you do--get contacts?

Surprised, Will pats his face.

WILL
Well, I'll be damned.

ROY
And you've edited about 30 pages of that manuscript since yesterday. What are you on?

WILL
Nothing. I think I just caught up on my sleep. I grabbed 20 hours of sleep yesterday and I feel 20 years younger.

ROY
And so now you can see without your glasses?

Mary's voice comes over the intercom:

MARY'S VOICE
You're due at the doctor's at 3:45.

WILL
(looks at his watch, leaps up)
Jesus, how did it get this late.

He grabs his sportscoat and hurries into...

THE OUTER OFFICE

Mary looks up.

MARY
Glasses.

WILL
Oops.
(he starts back; stops)
I don't need them.

Her eyebrows fly up as Will steps out the door into the corridor...and then stops, staring straight ahead.

WILL'S POV

Far down the corridor, sillouhetted in a doorway, Gary stands talking to a colleague. His voice is low, almost a murmur. But we, and Will, hear every word.

GARY
...have to keep it quiet but I hear Stewart is taking over for Will...

BACK TO WILL

as he stands, listening. His ears have rammed forward, and the hair on the back of his neck, which looks distinctly thicker today, rises, like hackles. He steps back into his office.

WILL
Mary get a book.

MARY
Which book?

WILL
Any book.

EXT. OFFICE CORRIDOR

Mary stands at one end of the long corridor holding a book, Will stands at the other.

WILL
Read. Very softly. From the middle of the book.

WOL 5048

MARY
"...but no one has, thus far, has equalled Robert Fitzgerald's..."

WILL
Turn around and keep reading.

MARY
(turning)
"...glorious translation of the works of Virgil..."

WILL
Stop.

MARY
(turning back)
Shall I tell you what I read?

WILL
I...I know what you read. And I agree with it.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

CLOSE on the syringe puncturing skin, as Will gets his second rabies shot. We hear him over the shot:

WILL'S VOICE
Ralph, what are the symptoms of rabies?

The ANGLE WIDENS as the Doctor thinks a moment, then responds:

DOCTOR
Fever, headache, vomiting...then restless excitement, muscle spasms, hallucinations...then trouble swallowing, foaming ...then death. You don't have rabies, Will.

WILL
I know, I know...but I have felt restless excitement. What about acute hearing? Enhanced sense of smell?

The Doctor gently withdraws the needle, swabs the site.

DOCTOR
It's not in the literature. Will, you do not have rabies. Even if the dog was rabid --

WILL
The wolf.

DOCTOR
The wolf, pardon me--we caught it. All we've got to do now is finish the course of injections. Only three to go...

Will hops off the table, grabs his shirt. As he begins to button it up:

DOCTOR
Did you start exercising.

WILL
Not yet, but I will.

DOCTOR
Because you look a little ... firmer.

WILL
(grins)
Well I feel firmer, doc. And it's nice of you to say so.

INT. RANDALL APARTMENT - EVENING

As Will enters, he calls:

WILL
Charl? You home?

The answering machine is blinking. Will pushes play.

CHARLOTTE'S VOICE
Just letting you know I made it to New Haven in one piece. Forgot I was going, didn't you? I'm back tomorrow after the seminar. There's food in the fridge.

End of message. Will sags, then CLICKS off the machine.

INT. KITCHEN - WILL

still in his suit and tie, standing over the stove, dropping chunks of ground meat into a frying pan. He pops the last piece of raw meat into his mouth, loosens his tie, and begins taking off his jacket as he lopes out of the room.

THE BEDROOM - WILL

His trousers are now off and he flings them on the bed, throws open the closet and takes out some chinos. He pauses as he catches a glimpse of himself in the closet-door mirror. His body looks tight and sleek.

WILL
What am I doing right?

WOL5048

He throws a few mock punches at his image, flexes, then steps in the closet, grips the clothes rod, chins himself up to the top shelf and grabs a sweatshirt in his teeth..then lowers himself, triumphantly...then freezes. Then sniffs. He drops the sweatshirt and sniffs again, then takes one of Charlotte's blouses and presses it to his face. He drops the blouse, picks up a dress, sniffs...then he stands, motionless, his eyes narrow and unblinking.

EXT. A CONVERTED BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Will moves up to it, goes up the stairs to the stoop, studies the buzzers, presses the one with the name Swinton on it. Stewart's voice comes over the intercom.

STEWART'S VOICE
Yes?

WILL
It's Will.

STEWART'S VOICE
(after a moment)
I'll come down.

Will waits, prowling back and forth on the narrow landing, the hair on the back of his neck raised. A FEW PASSERSBY

see him and move away from the house, one even crossing the street.

Stewart opens the brownstone door a few inches and peers out of the crack.

STEWART
Hey, Will--what's going...

He breaks off as Will abruptly slams the front door all the way open, smashing him backward, and lunges past him up the stairs. After a stunned moment Stewart races after him.

STEWART
What the fuck is wrong with you...

He catches up with Will as they approach the first landing and puts his hand on his shoulder. Will turns his head, and without breaking stride, sinks his teeth into Stewart's hand. Stewart snatches it back.

STEWART
Jesus! Will...

Suddenly, without apparant effort, Will increases his speed, bounding up the stairs, leaving Stewart far behind, panting after him.

Will reaches the top floor and pounds on the door once. Charlotte opens it, one of Stewart's shirt's clutched around her.

CHARLOTTE
What did he...

She stops, her mouth open. Husband and wife stare at each other, hopelessly.

Stewart reaches the upper landing, panting, gasping for air...and sees it is too late. She has answered the door. There is silence. Then Will turns and walks past Stewart down the stairs and out.

Stewart and Charlotte do not move for a moment.

STEWART
(finally)
I'm sorry.

CHARLOTTE
Yes. I'll get dressed.

INT. MACLEISH HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Will strides into the outer office. His face is set, his eyes are hard. Mary looks up.

MARY
Morning, Mr. Ran...

WILL
Open your rolodex, Mary - I've moved across the park, to The Mayflower.

MARY
Okay.
(then)
Is it...permanent.

WILL
Yes. Call legal and find out if the Alden deal is really closed or if they're still dicking around on points...
(her eyebrows shoot up at this new word)
Then tell Roy to come in here with a list of every name author he's worked with in this house. Then get me a list of every name author I've worked with starting with Maude...
(her pencil is now flying over a steno pad)
...then call Alden and see if you can get me an appointment to see him later this afternoon at his estate.

MARY WOL5048
Yes, sir.

He turns and strides, not into his office, but back out the door.

INT. STEWART'S OFFICE - SAME

He stares out the window into Union Square Park. He looks pale, almost sad.

The door opens and Will walks in without knocking. Stewart turns and sees him. The two men stand facing each other.

Stewart shakes his head, lifts his palms in a helpless, "what can I say" gesture. The silence continues. Stewart cannot bear it.

STEWART
What do you want me to do? I'll do it. Resign today? Promise never to see Charlotte again? Spell it out.

WILL
I want you to resign today.

STEWART
(after a moment)
Well, I can't do <u>that</u>.
(he shakes his head)
So why did I say it?
(he looks down)
I guess it's just a way of saying...of telling you how bad I feel about being such...such a shit. I...love you Will--I know how that sounds--but I do...and I know how much I've hurt you and it kills me. And I know I don't have any defense...

WILL
Oh, sure you do. Everybody has a defense. Genghis Kahn had a defense.

STEWART
I think Ghengis Kahn is just slightly out of my league, don't you? I mean, this is not major league evil. It's not like Alden would have kept you on if I didn't take your job. You're a brilliant editor but you're not a natural head honcho. And it's not like Charlotte wouldn't have had an affair if I wasn't around. You're a great husband but, probably... maybe not a great lover. I mean, I didn't <u>steal</u> anything from you. It was there for the asking.
(Will stares at him)
I know I can't...you'll never forgive me, will you?

WILL
No.

STEWART
Okay. But still I...I'd like your permission to ask Alden to forget about the Eastern Europe thing and keep you on as senior editorial consultant. Will you let me do that for you?

WILL
(after a moment)
I'm going to get you, Stewart.

He turns and walks out.

INT. WILL'S OUTER OFFICE - MARY, ROY

look up as Will flings open the door and strides past them into his office. They follow behind him both talking, excitedly.

ROY
(waving papers)
I have my authors list....

MARY
The deal with Alden is not completely closed....

ROY
What a fucking brilliant guess...

MARY
And Mr. Alden will see you this afternoon at four.

They are now in WILL'S OFFICE. Mary takes out her pad and writes as Will speaks.

WOL5048

WILL
Roy, get on the phone with every name author you've ever worked with and ask them if they'd like to be partners in--not workers for, but partners in--their own publishing company. Read them the list of authors who are coming with me, starting with Maude Waggins, and explain to them that on the basis of my reputation and your reputation and their collective names as authors, we can raise more than enough money-- either privately or by going public--to start a publishing house in which they will share, not as they do now, in the watered down profits of their own hard earned labor, but in the overall profits of their own company. Tell them that we are leaving Macleish House because it is being taken over by a multi-billionaire who knows nothing about publishing but has circulated a memo saying that the new unofficial policy of the house is to push anything that sells and--this'll get 'em--bury anything that doesn't take off like a rocket. And don't keep this a secret. Wait until just before closing today and then let it leak.

ROY
Two things.

WILL
Go.

ROY
Did all the writers on your list say they'd go with you?

WILL
I haven't asked them yet.

ROY
But you want me to say it anyway?

WILL
Yes.

ROY
Second thing. Is any of it true?

WILL
Not yet.

WOL5048

ROY
You're my god.

He sprints out of the room. Will turns to Mary who has been wildly flipping pages as he spoke.

WILL
Get me my rolodex, Mary. I have calls to make and things to do.

EXT. ALDEN ESTATE - LATE AFTERNOON

Will's aging Volvo rattles up to the gate. The Guard steps out and leans into the window.

GUARD
Do you have an appointment, sir?... Oh, Mr. Randall. Nice to see you again. Go right in.

WILL
Boss in a good mood today?

GUARD
Pretty good. He's a pretty good boss. He's from New Hampshire, you know.

WILL
No, I didn't. So what does that mean?

GUARD
Whatever the hell he wants it to.

Will smiles and, with a little wave, drives in.

INT. DEN - ALDEN ESTATE

It looks leathery and woody with books and a few deer's head and silky persian rugs. Alden starts up as Will enters.

WILL
Don't get up. I just wanted to tell you I'm turning down Eastern Europe.

ALDEN
I more or less thought you would.

WILL
Nice seeing you again, sir.
(he starts out)

ALDEN
Wait a minute. That's why you wanted an appointment? To tell me you were turning down Eastern Europe?

WILL
Yes. And I wanted to tell it to you the same way you told me, face-to-face.

He walks out.

EXT. GROUNDS

as Will walks out of the mansion, his eyes alert, scanning the grounds. He stops, looks around, listens, sniffs, makes a decision and starts walking toward the stable.

As he walks down the path a Doberman moves toward him. The guard dog sniffs Will, then growls. Without breaking stride Will growls back, more guttural, more threatening than the Doberman--who quickly turns tail and scampers off.

ANGLE - STABLE

as Will walks toward it he sees Laura come out. He has either guessed right or caught her scent or seen something. She is in torn jeans and scuffed boots and carrying a crop.

WILL
Hi.

Laura turns and sees him.

LAURA
Hi. Well, you look better.

WILL
So do you.

LAURA
I see you've come out of your shell.

WILL
Yes.
(a beat)
Let me say this and get it over with. My marriage has ended.

LAURA
Oh.
(there is a long pause)
Well...I have absolutely nothing to say...except "great" if that's the way you wanted it and "sorry" if it isn't.

WILL
I also wanted to say that you're a beautiful, valuable woman and you shouldn't be in hospitals and dry-out clinics. You should be...

LAURA
...happy?

WOL5048

WILL
Of course not. I'm not a total fool. But...hopeful.

LAURA
(she looks away; then)
Now I'm embarrassed.
(she shifts, uncomfortably)
Would you like some coffee?

WILL
I don't want to go back in the house.

LAURA
I'm the daughter of a billionaire. I have my own house.

She points to small cottage near with a circle of deliberately unkempt lawn that looks like a glaring error next to the smooth green.

WILL
Coffee would be great.

INT. COTTAGE

It is careless, comfortable, not the work of a homemaker. A tray with empty coffee cups, a carton of milk and the remains of sandwiches sits on a coffee table. Next to it is a jar of peanut butter, a jar of jelly and a loaf of Wonder bread.

Will sits eating the last of his sandwich and turning the pages of a photo album with his pinkie. It has a series of pictures of Laura as a child sitting on various ponies and horses. Laura has pulled her shirt up almost over her head.

LAURA
This is the most embarrassing half hour I've ever spent.

WILL
(calmly)
Oh, here's a cute picture.

LAURA
PLEASE! Give it back. You can't possibly be interested in the childhood pictures of a woman you've just met.

WILL
For your information I'm looking at the horses. Ah! You on another horse. You on a pony.
(he closes the book; she sighs)
Didn't you ever walk?

LAURA
(snatching the book up)
No. Not until I was twelve. I was in love with horses... and dogs... and any animal that was injured. I was a complete bust with people - but, oh, those animals.

WILL
What happened at twelve? Boys?

LAURA
My mother died. And I was sent to boarding school. It was nothing. I mean, it was shit but I was rich and it makes me queasy to talk about how rough my life is with all this money.

WILL
Yes. Money isn't everything but--

LAURA
--it's a great perk.

EXT. ESTATE - WILL, LAURA - STROLLING

past gardens, stables, a barn with a large helicoper parked beside it.

WILL
Jesus, this place has it's own heliport.

LAURA
Why did your marriage end?
(he does not answer)
I have a right to ask.

WILL
(after a moment)
My wife preferred a protege of mine.

They walk in silence for a few moments.

LAURA
Do you have children?

WILL
No.

LAURA
Why?

WILL
She had...we couldn't. And we made the decision not to adopt. And then, I guess I thought my authors would be my children, I would care for them, I would have proteges and guide them...

LAURA
(they walk for a moment)
Well, it's shit and it hurts but it beats being in Somalia.

WILL
What a way you have of putting things in perspective. You're really ruthless, aren't you?

LAURA
Am I? Why? Isn't it true?

WILL
Yes...but...I think absolutely no self-pity is probably as damaging as too much.

LAURA
Want to climb that hill?

WILL
I fascinate you, don't I? My observations, my words of wisdom.

LAURA
It's pretty steep.

WILL
For an old guy.

LAURA
Right.

WILL
I'll give it a shot.

They start up the hill. She goes slowly for his benefit and he laughs and takes her hand and begins running up pulling her behind.

AT THE TOP OF THE WOOD-FRINGED HILL she collapses laughing and panting and Will sits down beside her--laughing but barely winded.

LAURA
(gasping)
You're...you...you're...

WOL5048

WILL
Catch your breath first.

LAURA
(finally)
You're in the best shape of any guy over thirty I know. Maybe under thirty, too.

WILL
You probably think that because I'm in better shape than you. But remember, you're only a woman.

LAURA
(she smacks him)
You bum.

They lie contentedly in the grass. It is still except for the rustle of leaves and grasses and birds. The sun is beginning to spread across the sky in a late summer sunset.

WILL
God, what a gorgeous place.

LAURA
Isn't it? I'm glad you like it. This is where I used to come to bury my pets. And this...
(she pats the earth)
...is where I realized that one day I would die. Standing right here on this spot I realized one day I would be over.

Will looks at her. She lies on her back, close to him... within easy kissing distance.

WILL
You are...really beautiful.

LAURA
Am I?

WILL
You must know that you are.

LAURA
No. I've always thought I was fat. And I hate my nose.

WILL
Miss Romance.
(she laughs)
Do you like poetry?

LAURA
I have to hear it first.

WILL
How's your memory.

LAURA
Incredible.

WILL
See if you can say this back to me. "Love is not love/Which alters when it alteration finds,/Or bends with the remover to remove:/Oh, no, it is an ever-fixed mark/That looks on tempests and is never shaken;/"
(her eyes are narrow slits of concentration)
I'll skip. "Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,/But bears it out even to the edge of doom."

LAURA
(after a moment)
"Love is not love/Which alteration...which alters when it alteration finds..."

As she haltingly recites the lovely words Will's eyes suddenly move past her to a flicker of movement in the trees. A deer stands there, eating tranquilly. It suddenly freezes and stares directly at Will. Will watches, motionless, alert...then his body twitches and the deer turns and races off. He forces his attention back to Laura...who is staring at him.

LAURA
I'm <u>really</u> boring you, aren't I?

WILL
No, no. I'm sorry. I just... something caught my eye.

LAURA
I mean, this is <u>your</u> fucking poem...

WILL
I know... I'm really sorry.
(after a moment)
I want to tell you something.
(she waits)
A few days ago... something happened to me.
(she waits)
I was driving, in New England, and I hit an animal.

LAURA WOL5048
Oh, God.

WILL
It was a wolf. And just before it died, it bit me.

He holds up his lightly bandaged wrist.

LAURA
You get checked for rabies?

WILL
Yes, but...since then...I feel like maybe it passed along a scrap of it's spirit, in my blood, or something. I...mean all my senses are suddenly, incredibly acute. And I feel so...
(he laughs)
...great. I mean, I've never been the kind of person who walks around just...feeling great. I don't know what it is. I'm just...different. More alive. Stronger. Last week I could never have run up that hill.

LAURA
(she thinks about it)
Sounds strange, but--

WILL
--it's better than living in Bosnia.

LAURA
(she laughs)
No, no. I wasn't going to say that. I was going to say that, whatever it is--if you feel great--maybe you should just accept it...as a gift.

WILL
I'm afraid it will have a price.

LAURA
There <u>is</u> that.

They sit in silence...watching the darkening sky.

WILL
May I stay with you tonight?

LAURA
(after a moment)
No. Because then that's all we'll remember.

WILL
(he sits up)
Then I'd better go.

LAURA
You could stay in the guest house. I know it's not the same, but I'll knock at your door at seven sharp with breakfast... and if you wake up early you'll see the most glorious sunrise. And I make a great spanish omelet. And I... would... like you to stay.

WILL
Then I will.

EXT. GUEST COTTAGE - NIGHT

Laura leads Will up to the door, opens it.

LAURA
Breakfast at seven sharp.

She turns and bounds away, then turns back and smiles at him, beaming like a child who has gotten her way, then she is off.

INT. GUEST COTTAGE - WILL

He looks around, opens the window, inhales the night air... then wanders over to the bookshelves and chooses a book...then flops down in a lounger and begins to read. Almost instantly his eyes begin closing...he snaps awake, tries to read some more but this time his lids close slowly, inexorably... and he is asleep.

ANGLE - THE SHUTTER - LATER

flapping against the open window. A slight wind has risen and stirred the sheer drapery. Several leaves now lie on the sill.

Will is still asleep in the lounger, the book open on his chest. He opens his eyes...and is instantly awake. He rises, letting the book fall to the ground, and goes to the door.

WOL5048

EXT. GROUNDS

They are bathed in moonlight. Will is walking, quickly, intently toward the hill. It rises in front of him, a great dark silhouette in the night, and he begins to climb.

AT THE TOP of the hill he pauses and looks off toward the woods where he saw the deer. His eyes, in the moonlight, are yellow, almost without pupils. He is alert, wary, as he walks silently into the fringe of woods.

He moves through the trees, dotted with the moonlight that shines through the branches. His ears are forward, his nose slightly raised...then he stops and crouches down close to a tree, almost invisible in the darkness. And waits.

Suddenly, a shadow darts out of it's cover, nearby--a deer--and he leaps to his feet, instantly in pursuit, his legs powerful and sure, his expression empty, intent. There is neither enjoyment nor awareness in his eyes. Only purpose.

As the race continues the deer gains distance. And Will's footsteps slow, his breath becomes loud. The deer bounds blindly forward to the edge of the woods...and into the stun-fence that surrounds the edges of the estate.

ANGLE - THE DEER

as it regains it's footing, bounds a few feet, slows, circles, stops. It looks left and right. It is alone. It has escaped it's predator. It puts it's head down to graze again ... and, suddenly, from a rock formation above, Will jumps down, landing on it, toppling it, tearing with his teeth at the deer's hind leg, it's tendon...

EXT. GROUNDS - SUNRISE

as glorious as Laura said it would be. Will lies on the ground on his stomach, inches away from a narrow stream that cuts through the woods. His jacket is torn. He is scratched and bruised and his shirt and hands are covered with blood. He stirs, slowly, and before his eyes are fully opened, he leans his face into the stream and laps the water.

He rolls away, still not fully awake, and then, gradually, he opens his eyes and lies staring blankly up at the sky for a moment... Then he sits up, abruptly, looks around, bewildered, sees the blood on his hands, then on his shirt, sees his torn jacket, and the scratches and cuts on the backs of his hand and cries out. He quickly begins feeling himself for wounds...then he stumbles to his feet and begins to run.

EXT. ESTATE GATE

As Will's volvo drives toward it. The guard steps out and recognizes the car. He opens the gate.

GUARD
(waving as Will passes)
'Bye now, Mr. Randall.

EXT. GUEST HOUSE - 7:00 - LAURA

carefully manipulating a huge breakfast tray, heaped with food. There is a newspaper on it and an unblown rose. Her face is creased with concentration and she is reciting under her breath as she walks.

LAURA
..."Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,/But bears it out even to the edge of doom./....Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks..."

She reaches the door and knocks with her foot. Knocks again. Sees the open window, looks in...and sees the room is empty, the bed not slept in. She steps back blinking, like someone who has been slapped, then turns away.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Will sits on the table in his shorts, his cuts and scratches bandaged. The doctor is looking into his eyes with a light.

DOCTOR
No idea at <u>all</u> how this happened?

WILL
None. I was reading a book...and then it was morning and I was like this.

DOCTOR
Ever sleepwalk?

WILL
Not that I know of.

DOCTOR
Well, it sounds like you took yourself a little walk in your sleep and fell and maybe knocked yourself out. I don't feel any swelling around the head...but there are some scalp lacerations...
(he shrugs)
...and, frankly, that's the only thing I can think of.

WILL
Thank God for science. And all this blood?

DOCTOR
Nothing bleeds like the scalp unless it's the nose...and there's a good possibility you had a nosebleed. Now I'm going to make arrangements for you to get an EEG and a catscan and spend the night at Mount Sinai...

WILL
(hopping off the table)
Out of the question.

DOCTOR
Will, you could have a concussion, a possible blood clot...

WILL
(as he dresses)
Nobody feels this good with a concussion.

DOCTOR
I have to insist.

WILL
I have to refuse. Doc, I have a very big day today. No way I'll miss it.

DOCTOR
Goddam you, Will. I'll tell Charlotte.

WILL
Charlotte and I are no longer together.

DOCTOR
Oh. I'm sorry. Well, Jesus... you shouldn't be alone. At least, promise me that.

WILL
I promise.

DOCTOR
And will you watch your responses?

WILL
(as he starts out, now fully dressed)
Absolutely.

DOCTOR
If there's any nausea, headache, dizziness, irregular pupil size...

WILL
I'll call you.

And he is out the door.

INT. MACLEISH HOUSE - MORNING

Will strides in, a few bandaids cover his face and hands.

MARY
What happened to you?

WILL
I fell down. Fill me in.

MARY
We got three more callbacks from authors. And Maude is now, personally, calling every one on your list. And Mr. Alden is waiting in your office with his lawyer.

WILL
Perfect.

He strides in.

INT. WILL'S OFFICE

Alden sits there with a 2nd man (ROBERT KEYES).

WILL
Ah, Mr. Alden. Good to see you again so soon, sir.

ALDEN
Good to see you, Will. This is Robert Keyes, my counsel.

WILL
Nice to meet you, counselor.
(they shake hands)

KEYES
Nice to meet you, Mr. Randall.

ALDEN
(as if it's his office)
Sit down, Will.

WILL
Thank you.

ALDEN
I want to tell you that if one author submits one manuscript that is one page too short--or leaves before he fullfills his contract--I will sue.

WILL
One author in the world?

ALDEN
Don't waste your sense of humor on me, Will. I have none. You're deliberately goading the top writers of this house to leave and become part of some totally improbable scheme that has no hope of succeeding--but being writers they're too goddamned stupid to know it.

WILL
You may very well be right, Mr. Alden. They might not succeed -- but it won't hurt them to try. And if they fail any publishing house will be glad to get them.

ALDEN
And you with them.

WILL
Yes. That will be part of the deal. But either way, Mr. Alden, whether we start a publishing house or go to another publishing house, at least seven first rate authors will leave MacLeish House because
(MORE)

WILL (cont'd)
they don't like it's policies. And when I issue that press release --which I intend to do tomorrow-- the value and reputation of this firm will take a giant nose dive.

There is a long pause.

ALDEN
Well, you're a worse son-of-a-bitch than Stewart.

WILL
Yes, but I still have those two big drawbacks--taste and individuality.

ALDEN
Maybe I can overlook them.
(another pause)
Alright. Call it off. Keep your job. I would never have fired you in the first place if I knew you were this ruthless.

WILL
Thank you. But before I do anything I would like a deal memo that gives me additional powers and additional monies. And I would like it by tomorrow morning.

WOL5048

KEYES
(taking out a pen)
Spell out your terms.

WILL
No, I'm going to let you spell them out. That'll save us a lot of negotiating time. And if I don't like what I read I won't sign the deal memo and I'll issue the press release.

KEYES
I won't agree to that.

ALDEN
Yes, you will. I'd do it anyway. What do I know about publishing.
(he rises)
I'll tell Stewart.

WILL
Don't. Don't tell anyone until the deal memo is signed. Then I'll tell Stewart.

ALDEN
Done.
(they shake hands; Alden studies him)
You didn't leave my estate until dawn today.

WILL
Yes. Don't pretend you care.

ALDEN
(Alden's face changes for a split second, then it is normal again)
Let's go, Bob. We've got a lot of work to do.

They go out. Will stares after them, his eyes glittering and triumphant. Then he reaches for the phone. Dials. Listens as the phone rings and rings.

WILL
(to the phone)
Where are you, Laura?
(he hangs up, sings)
"Laura, is the face in the misty light..."

EXT. UNION SQUARE - EVENING - WILL

As he walks, still whistling "Laura" he does little physical tricks: flips a coin and catches it behind his back, reaches out a hand and interrupts a sailing frisbee, grabbing it in midflight...then turning and sailing it along to the dog it was intended for. The dog puts it's tails between it's legs and whines but makes no move.

An old Indian squats on the sidewalk, a shawl over his shoulders, a tray of long stemmed "peace" pipes, sitting on the ground beside him. The sign says GENUINE PEACE PIPES. $1.50.

WILL
Are they genuine old Indian peace pipes?

INDIAN
No... almost genuine. But not... old.

WILL
Are you genuine?

INDIAN
(smiling)
Yes. I am a genuine old Indian.

WILL
Give me two.

Will holds out some bills and the old man hands him the pipes...and then suddenly stares at him, his old eyes narrowed.

WILL
What?

INDIAN
I have never seen one before.

WILL
One what?

INDIAN
One like you.

WILL
What's different about me.

But the old man shakes his head and looks down. Will's eyes suddenly flame with rage. He kicks the tray of pipes aside and grabs the old man, jerking him to his feet.

WILL
What's different about me!

The old man closes his eyes and raises his chin, tilting his head to one side. He stands motionless for a moment...until Will quickly releases him.

WILL
I...I'm terribly sorry. I... Did I hurt you? Are you alright?

The Indian shakes his head. Will kneels and begins collecting the pipes he scattered.

WILL
I'll pay for all of these. I'm really sorry.

He reaches into his pocket and hands the Indian every bill in his wallet but one.

WILL
Here. Forty dollars. For your pipes.

INT. MAYFLOWER HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

There are now 15 peace pipes on the dresser. Will is finishing a massive, room service steak. He reaches over with one hand and picks up the phone, holding the steakbone in the other. He dials with such speed that we know he has been doing it all day.

LAURA'S VOICE
Hello.

WILL
Laura! I've been trying to call you all...
(There is a a dial tone; Will dials again, then)
DON'T HANG UP! Will you let me explain?

LAURA'S VOICE
No.

WILL
Why?

LAURA'S VOICE
Because, first of all, I'm not a fan of men who mysteriously disappear in the morning. And second of all--fuck you.

WILL
WAIT! I was in an accident, goddamit. I nearly got killed. I sleepwalked out of the cottage last night and fell on my head and knocked myself out. I drove to the doctor's at six this morning.

WOL5048

LAURA'S VOICE
(after a moment)
That's the best excuse I've ever heard. Now can I hang up?

WILL
I swear to you it's true--as you'll realize when you see me...if you'll see me. Please see me. May I see you tomorrow night.

LAURA'S VOICE
No.

WILL
Well, call the fucking doctor if you don't believe me. Please. And finish drying. The sound of that towel is driving me nuts.

INT. LAURA'S COTTAGE - LAURA

Her head is wrapped in a towel and she is, in fact, drying herself as she speaks to Will. She stops, open-mouthed, and stares at the phone.

LAURA
Are you telling me that you hear what I'm doing over the phone.

WILL'S VOICE
Yes. That's one of my new gifts. Laura, please see me tomorrow night...or any night. Please.

THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE IS INTERCUT:

LAURA
What did the doctor say? Are you okay?

WILL
Yes. I have to watch my responses for the next 24 hours...
(he looks down)
...but as of now they seem pretty normal.
(silence)
Laura?

LAURA
(after a moment)
I'll see you at your hotel tomorrow night at seven. You better be there. And you better look like you fell.

WILL
I will be and I do. What did you...

But she has hung up.

WILL
...make me for breakfast.

He hangs up the phone, smiling...rises, stretches, paces restlessly. Clicks on the TV, channel surfs through, stops at a sex channel and watches, riveted.

WILL
That's right--aim that crack right at the camera, baby...aim it right at me...wiggle that big, pink ass right at me...

He stands, abruptly. Turns off the TV, goes to the closet, and grabs a jacket, then sees his face in the mirror. It has a thick stubble. He picks up an electric razor and clicks the TV on, then rifles through the stations again.

He hits a Chuck Jones cartoon from the 40's: A wolf in spats ogles a shapely babe who's undulating past, the wolf's eyeballs grotesquely distended.

Will stares at the screen for a moment, frozen...then, abruptly, clicks off the TV, clicks off the razor and goes out.

EXT. COLUMBUS CIRCLE - PARK ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The benches are almost solidly occupied with sleeping men and women. Vendors stand at the curb, two ragged men sift through a trash can on the corner. The beggars, the junkies, the homeless, and the crazies mix incongruously with the tourists who were told that Columbus Circle is a landmark.

Will wanders along, eyes bright and excited. He stops at a vendor's stand and buys three hot dogs, then throws away the buns and begins eating them.

A BLACK MAN in, literally, strips of clothing comes up to him.

BLACK MAN
My main man! Can I ask you for a dollar for food? I ain't gonna buy no crack, no alcohol. I'm just hungry...

WILL
(pulling out a bill)
Here's five. Buy whatever the hell you need.

He continues to walk, watching everything with interest and anticipation. He catches the genuinely crazy eye of a homeless man.

A MAN
Whatchoo lookin' at?

WOL5048

WILL
Whatchoo care?

The man stares at him for a moment, deciding whether or not to make something out of it, decides not to, walks on.

Will moves on inside the entrance of the park. Three hookers sit on a bench, smoking and snorting cocaine. They rise as they see Will.

1ST HOOKER
Hi.

WILL
Hi.

2ND HOOKER
Want a date?

WILL
How much?

2ND HOOKER
25 dollars. Take your pick.

WILL
Well...let me see...you're all so delightful.
(to the 1st Hooker)
You're having your period...

1ST HOOKER
(staring at him, mouth open))
What are you--psychic?

WILL
...so I definitely want you.
(to the 2nd Hooker)
You're pretty but you're a man...

2ND HOOKER
(he grins)
That's why God created blow jobs.

WILL
(grins back)
Probably, but I pass.
(he points to the 3rd hooker)
And you have such an incredible ass that I'd like to start with it.
(he offers his arm)
Do you have a little free time?

1ST HOOKER
Sure, darling. Where do you want it?

WILL
(pointing to some bushes)
There is fine.

As they move toward bushes the hooker hikes up her short skirt. She is naked underneath. They are barely out of sight when the two cops come out of the park with a man in handcuffs. The 2nd hooker whistles shrilly toward the bushes as she moves away

The two cops exchange glances and one of them walks over and parts the bushes. Will lies on the grass beside the hooker. She has unbuckled his belt and is just unzipping his pants.

1ST COP
Alright, come on. Get up. Come on.

WILL
We won't be long, officer. Just close the bushes behind you.

The policeman, who's tone has been tolerant, almost weary, stiffens. The Hooker rises.

1ST COP
(to Will)
What are you--wise?

WILL
Well...compared to whom? Compared to Socrates I'm an idiot. Compared to you I'm Socrates.

1ST COP
(after a moment; coldly)
Stand up.

WILL
Nah.

The Hooker turns and walks quickly away...as the cop pulls out a pair of handcuffs and reaches for Will's arm. Will, in a movement so swift it is blurred, rolls aside, grabs the handcuffs and yanks them hard. The cop goes down with a shout.

The 2nd cop hears and steps quickly forward, reaching for his gun. His prisoner, free for an instant, races into the trees, his hands still handcuffed behind him. Will, still holding the handcuffs, turns and races into the park. The word "Freeze!" echoes behind him.

WUL5048

EXT. - THE DEPTHS OF CENTRAL PARK - WILL RUNNING

His eyes are like lamps in the dark as he races along, leaps a low outcrop of rock...and then finally slows and circles like the deer on Alden's estate. He looks left, then right. He is alone.

He begins moving toward the path. A group of four boys, loitering in a group near one of the street lights sees him, and with an exchange of looks, and a ripple of low, excited laughter, they start after him.

Will walks quickly, his ears forward as he hears the steps on the path behind him. The boys move briskly, then lope forward until they are abreast of Will, surrounding him.

1ST BOY
Hey, man--you walking too fast.

2ND BOY
What's your hurry, man.

3RD BOY
I bet you got a date. Look at his suit, he got a date.

The 4th boy circles in front of Will and walks backward, smiling, his arms out, like a basketball guard.

4TH BOY
Hey, you got a date, man? Is that what you so dressed up for?

WILL
Yeah.

As though the sound of Will's voice has signalled them, the boys draw in tighter, crowding him with their bodies. The 4th boy stops abruptly forcing Will to stand still.

4TH BOY
(running his hands down Will's lapels)
Now that is a nice suit. I'd like to try that suit on.

3RD BOY
(putting his arm around Will)
Would that be okay with you? See, we want to get dressed up, too. We want to...

The boy's face suddenly contorts with incredible pain and he doubles up, gasping. The other boys stare at him for a moment, startled, and in that moment Will and the boy turn, facing each other, almost as though they were executing a dance step, until Will is outside the circle and the boy is in his place. Will's hand is clutching the boys testicles in an iron grasp, the boys eyes bulge with pain.

The other boys now see what has happened and lunge for Will...who leaps back, his upper lip curled...his teeth exposed, the hair on the back of his neck raised. The boys pause for a moment and then one pulls out a knife.

Will reaches down, pulls up a metal chain post and holds it up in one hand, then he growls. Two of the boys back away. The 3rd boy is rolling on the ground in agony. The 4th boy stares into Will's eyes, almost hypnotized, then springs forward with the knife. Will lunges aside and grabs his hand. The boy screams.

INT. MACLEISH HOUSE - WILL'S OUTER OFFICE

Will strides in, crisp and shaved and in high spirits. He is wearing the same suit he wore last night and he is eating a hot dog in the bun.

MARY
Ugh. Good morning, Mr. Randall. You're looking rumpled.

WILL
Yes. I seem to have packed skimpily. The big boys here?

MARY
Yes, sir. Deal memo in hand.

INT. WILL'S OFFICE - ALDEN, KEYES, WILL

Will sits behind his desk reading the deal memo. Keyes sits tensely, watching, terrified that he has made a mistake and Will will not sign. Alden leans back smoking a cigar, his face serene. After a moment Will pauses. Keyes leaps up.

KEYES
What? The stock options? That's a better deal than you'll get at any publishing house in this town. Jason Epstein doesn't...

WILL
It's a grease spot. I'm afraid I'm not a neat eater.

He continues reading for another few moments, then picks up a pen and signs the memo. Keyes body relaxes and the three men rise. Will holds out his hand.

WILL
I'm sure it will be a pleasure working for you, Mr. Alden.

WUL5048

ALDEN
(shaking hands)
With the deal we've just made I should be saying that to you.

WILL
See? You do have a sense of humor.

EXT. OUTER OFFICE - ROY, MARY

They sit, talking quietly, apparently absorbed in a serious conversation, until Keyes and Alden walk through and out the door. Then they spring up and scramble madly into

WILL'S OFFICE - He spreads out his arms.

WILL
Say hello to your new old boss.

They scream and hug him and each other...then Roy stops.

ROY
What about the authors we...

WILL
Tell them Alden has made me an offer I can't refuse...and I'll see that each and every one of them benefits from it. And I mean that,
(MORE)

WILL (cont'd)
Roy. I'm going to make this a company that every author wants to sign with. That's... the great dream of my life.

ROY
You know what's so fucking interesting about you? You're the only guy I know who's finally got it all--and deserves it.

MARY
Hear, hear!

WILL
Thank you, Roy, Mary. Now--to find Stewart.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - STEWART

at a urinal. As Will enters and goes up to the urinal beside him, Stewart's stream of urine abruptly dries up.

STEWART
Will...I was just about to come see you to tell you that I talked to Alden about the senior consultant position and it's yours if you want it. It's less pay, of course, but so is Eastern Europe.

WOL5048

WILL
Thank you, Stewart. But I've had a better offer.

STEWART
(alert)
Really? That's...wonderful. What house?

WILL
This one.

He hands Stewart the deal memo. Stewart reads it...then looks up.

STEWART
I don't...I don't understand.

WILL
It's fairly simple, Stewart. I did the same thing you did. I nagged Alden until he gave me your job.

STEWART
But...when...I don't understand when...

WILL
(taking the deal memo back)
In my spare time, Stewart. I've had a lot of it recently.

STEWART
(after a moment)
Well, I... I...I guess I...I mean ... I guess I owe you some congratulations. I guess... the best man won. Shit, I'm glad in a way. I couldn't have given it up and I didn't like the way I got it. I hope we can work together without rancor...

WILL
You're fired, Stewart.

Will turns away, unzips his fly and stands over the urinal.

STEWART
Don't. Don't do it to me, Will. It will ruin me.

WILL
I know. But it's the best thing for the firm.

STEWART
Give me a few months. Let me say I quit...

WILL
No. It wouldn't be the best thing for the firm.

STEWART
You vindictive son-of-a-bitch, the best thing for the firm is me! I'm the best thing this firm has and you fucking know it! This is fucking revenge...

He trails off and looks down...then his eyes widen. Will is pissing on his loafers.

STEWART
(whispering)
Are you crazy?

WILL
No. I was just marking my territory and you're foot was there.

For a moment Stewart stares at him, speechless, then he turns and walks out. Will zips up, starts out...and stops as he sees his face in the mirror. His jaw is dark again. But the good news is that the hair on his head is definitely fuller, coarser. He looks admiringly at his new growth, then reaches into his pocket, takes out a comb...then stops. The comb has blood on it.

He stares at the comb, uncomprehendingly, for a moment, then reaches back in his pocket, his face full of fear...and slowly draws out two bloody human fingers.

WILL

No...GOD...

INT. ROY'S OFFICE - SAME

Roy is on the phone.

ROY

...Les, I can assure you, with Will Randall in charge you won't need your own publishing house...

He looks up startled as Will enters. Will's face is glazed with sweat, his breath is quick.

ROY

(into phone)

May I call you right back? ...

Bless you.

(he hangs up)

What the hell happened?

WILL

Roy, if I didn't come back you could do it, couldn't you?

ROY

Do what --?

WILL

I'll put a clause in my deal that in the event of death or incapacity you'll replace me as senior editor for the length of my contract...

ROY

What are you talking about? You're scaring me, Will. What...are you sick?

WILL

You can do it, can't you? You know what I want to build here... Please-- you can do it--

ROY
Look, I don't know what's going on, but...don't make it me. I'm HIV positive, Will...

WILL
You're alive.

ROY
Well, Jesus, so are you...
(he looks at Will's anguished face)
I don't understand...but I...yes. I can do it.

EXT. UNION SQUARE - WILL

He walks quickly along, dodging passersbye and traffic, then stops as he reaches the street where the old Indian sat, selling peace pipes. A new man is there with a sign that says "GENUINE ROLEX WATCHES--$18.50".

WILL
There was an old man, an Indian here the other day selling souvenirs...is he...do you know where I can find him?

WOL5048

MAN
No. Nobody stays in one place down here, you got to keep moving.

Will stands staring at him for a moment, then walks away.

EXT. STREET - EVENING - WILL

He walks aimlessly. His eyes are terrified. He pauses outside a church with a plaque that reads: JESUS SAVES.

INT. CHURCH

Will enters and sits at the far end of one of the benches. He looks around, blindly. An ordinary looking man in the garb of a priest comes toward him.

WILL
(hoarsely)
Father...

PRIEST
(waits; looks at him)
Tell me, my son. There is nothing so terrible that it cannot be helped by prayer.

WILL
Father...I'm losing my soul.

The priest stares at him for a moment, then puts his hand on Will's shoulder and says...

PRIEST
I will pray for you.

...then he continues on up the aisle. Will looks after him, then turns and falls to his knees and begins to pray in a loud, flat voice that is startling in the small church.

WILL
Don't let this happen to me. I've tried to be a decent man all my life. Don't let the beast take me.

INT. LOBBY - MAYFLOWER HOTEL - CHARLOTTE

sitting in the lobby. Waiting. Abruptly, she rises and goes over to Will who has just come in. He looks feverish, exhausted.

CHARLOTTE
Will...
(he takes a step back)
Please let me talk to you. For a moment. A moment of your time for sixteen years. Pretty cheap.

WILL
What do you want.

CHARLOTTE
I want to come back.

WILL
No.

CHARLOTTE
I have no excuse. I deserve anything you to do to me. I just...beg you to be kind.

WILL
What is this sudden renascence of feeling for me. Has Stewart become unloveable now that he's out of my job?

CHARLOTTE
I never loved Stewart. It was a mistake, Will. I'm going to tell him later. Stewart never, for one moment, meant anything to me.

He begins to shift, his eyes flickering with rage.

WILL
Do you think that helps? To know that you betrayed me, over and over, with a man who meant nothing to you? To know that you betrayed me for nothing.

His eyes flare and he turns away and starts quickly for the elevator. She grabs his arm.

CHARLOTTE
Don't be such a smug...

WILL
Keep away!

He shakes her arm off. She sees his face and backs away.

WILL
(softly)
Keep away.

He turns and goes into the elevator. Charlotte looks after him for a moment, then turns and goes out, passing Laura who has been watching, quietly. Laura averts her face.

Charlotte does not see her. After a moment, Laura goes hesitantly up to the desk.

LAURA WOL5048
Mr. Randall?

CLERK
The house phone is over there.

INT. WILL'S ROOM - WILL

He stands staring at the phone as it rings...and rings...and rings. Then it stops. He sags with relief, then goes over and closes the drapes...then lies down on the bed. There is a knock. He springs up.

LAURA'S VOICE
(it is very bright)
Hi. I thought I'd just come on up. Have you been going crazy waiting for me?

WILL
(after a moment)
I can't see you.

LAURA
Open the door, Will. You can't do this to me twice. Open it.

He stands staring at the door, almost in fear, as she knocks. Then the knocking stops.

WILL
Oh, Laura...

INT. CORRIDOR - LAURA

She is just walking up to a maid, smiling brightly.

LAURA
Excuse me...
(she opens her purse and takes out a thick wad of bills)
I wonder if you could do me a favor...

INT. WILL'S ROOM - NIGHT

There is the sound of a key and then Laura's voice says:

LAURA'S VOICE
Gracias.

MAID'S VOICE
De nada.

Will moves quickly to the radiator, sits. Laura steps into the room. It is dark, she waits for a moment as her eyes adjust to the light...then sees Will sitting on the floor near the window.

WILL
Please, go...

LAURA
Why? What's happened?

She sees now that he has handcuffed one wrist to the radiator pipe. She stares at him.

LAURA
What have you done? Where did you get those?

WILL
Oh, God, please go.

LAURA
No. Tell me why you've done this.

WILL
(after a moment)
I think I'm dangerous. Especially at night.

LAURA
And you're afraid you'll attack me?

WILL
Yes. I think I'm turning into... something else.

LAURA
Into the thing that bit you? Into the wolf?

WILL
Yes.

LAURA
(she moves slowly into the room as she speaks)
Well, let's say for the sake of argument that you <u>are</u> turning into a wolf. I know something about wolves. There's no reliable record in modern American history of a wolf attacking a human being unprovoked. In fact, wolves have a very strict code about violence. If two wolves are engaged in mortal combat and one of them exposes his throat in surrender, the other wolf won't hurt him. That's better than a lot of cops.

#UL5048

WILL
That's what the Indian did. He lifted his head.

LAURA
Is that the punchline to some famous old joke?

WILL
(after a moment)
Yes.

LAURA
And the <u>best</u> thing about wolves is that they mate for life...so if you're turning into a wolf, I'm staying.

WILL
You <u>are</u> so kind...it's almost unbearable.

LAURA
(she is now quite near him)
Oh, fuck you. Now--here's my deal.
(she picks up a steak knife off the room service table)

LAURA (cont'd)
Let me handcuff you to something that isn't on the floor so I don't have to sit under the window all night. And if you try to attack me I'll kill you.

WILL
Laura, leave me.

LAURA
Out of the question. Come on, Will, don't be dumb about this. Where's the key? In the few seconds it will take to handcuff you to something upright, you're not going to attack me. Where is it?

WILL
I don't have a key. I don't even know where the handcuffs came from.

LAURA
You don't have a key? Well... what was your plan? To just sit chained to the radiator till you grew paws?

WILL
(he smiles)
God, you almost make me feel like it isn't happening. I don't...I didn't have any plan. I didn't think past not hurting anyone.
(he yanks on the cuffs)
I don't think there's any way to open these.

LAURA
You don't know who you're dealing with.
(she looks around)
You see, when you're a druggie and a delinquent and you want to "get" your father--ah!
(she has spotted a stack of papers; goes to them)
--you hang out with a lot of hardcore sleazos--
(she takes a paper clip from the papers, straightens it)
--you get arrested with them, you commit a few crimes...

(MORE)

LAURA (cont'd)
(she kneels and inserts one end of the clip into the handcuffs lock and begins working it)
...and you pick up shit you never think you'll need--and then one day you meet a guy who chains himself to the radiator and it all falls into place.

WILL
I don't...why do you want this? any of this...this nightmare.

LAURA
I don't. I want you...so if that's part of the package...

WILL
But why? Why me?

LAURA
Because I think you can save me.

WILL
You think I can save you?

LAURA
Yes. I think you could make staying alive worth all the trouble.

WOL5048

WILL
Laura...

LAURA
You're such a mysterious thing to me. You're so exotic. You're a good man. I never thought I'd meet a good man who looked at me the way you do.

WILL
(slowly)
You don't know that I'm a good man.

LAURA
Oh, yes, I do.

WILL
Then why is this happening. I thought only the evil were damned.

LAURA
(carefully twisting the clip)
No, no, not at all. I could have told you that. The worst things happen to the best people. Ah... almost had it.
(she leans in toward the pipe)
You might consider that you're not damned at all. That you're sick. I read up on head injuries after that stupid excuse you gave me on the phone...and there are tumors that can cause all your symptoms. Don't jerk your body. I'll lose my place.

WILL
What do you mean? Are you serious?

LAURA
Yep. Hair growth, enhanced senses, the release of hormones that act just like the crap body builders and athletes use to bulk up. A little of that and --bingo--you can run up hills.

WILL
Oh, God--if that could be it...

LAURA
It could also be malignant...and fatal.

WILL
Oh, Laura, the luxury, the privelege of dying as a human being.

LAURA
How we lower our sites. Well, I say we get you examined for physical causes before we take for granted you're turning into a...
(the cuffs open)
...there we go. On your feet. Let's rehandcuff you.

She pulls him up, one cuff still clamped on his wrist.

WILL
Well...maybe it isn't necessary.

LAURA
Nope. That wasn't the deal. Put your hands behind your back.

He puts his hands behind him, she snaps the other cuff. Then she studies him.

LAURA
There. I think you're pretty helpless now.

WILL
(testing)
Yes.

LAURA
Great.

She begins opening his shirt.

WILL
Laura...
(he laughs)

LAURA
(unbuttoning her blouse)
Yes?

WILL
Nothing. Not a thing.

WUL5048

She takes her blouse off slowly, then backs him up until he falls, face up on the bed. In the dim light she kneels down over him, kissing him passionately. He rises up by mainstrength as far as the handcuffs allow, returning her kiss. She twists sideways taking off her skirt and panties, then pulling down his trousers...he groans...almost a growl as she slides down, impaling herself, her hands fluttering her head tilted up, her eyes closed.

TIME CUT

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

The room is a wreck. Will and Laura are asleep. Will's handcuffs are off and Laura lies with her head on on his chest. His hand rests on her forehead, almost covering her eyes, as though sparing her some hideous sight.

Will suddenly jerks in his sleep, then begins to move restlessly. Laura grunts and rolls away, snuggling into the pillow.

After a moment, Will's eyes open, burning into the darkness, glittering and changed. He sees Laura, and turns to look at her, studying her as if she were not only unfamiliar, but alien. He looms over her for a moment, watching her breathe, then turns and gets out of bed.

His shadow falls over her as he puts on his clothes. He makes no effort at silence. When there is a particularly loud noise, she shifts or makes a small sound, but her eyes do not open... not even when he goes out of the room and closes the door behind him.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - LATE NIGHT

Will moves through the dark greenery, pausing to look up at a half moon as if puzzled. He crawls to the top of a huge, house-sized boulder and sits, craning back his head to look at the heavens.

POV - THE NIGHT SKY

Whether Will's sight is more penetrating than our own, or the sky is particularly thick with stars and so clear we can see the pink and blue tinged galaxies, is uncertain...but we look upon an extraordinary sight: a brilliant, roiling heaven filled with moving lights and colors. Over it we hear the beginning of a howl.

CLOSE SHOT - LAURA - SLEEPING

The cool dawn light illuminates her face as she turns and the ANGLE WIDENS with her...revealing Will, asleep next to her. The sheet is fetchingly twisted around her, so that her back is partly bare...and as she turns toward Will, he stirs, opens his eyes, and places his hand on her bare bottom. Still asleep, she opens her arms.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - LATE MORNING

A man (BRIDGER) stands in front of Will's door, accompanied by a Bellhop. He hold a wallet in one hand, knocks with the other.

There is a beat and Laura's voice calls:

LAURA'S VOICE
Yes? Who is it?

BRIDGER
Detective Sergeant Bridger, NYPD.

There is a beat...and Laura opens the door six inches -- still chained. Bridger slides the wallet up to the crack.

LAURA
Yes?

BRIDGER
Is William Randall here?

LAURA
Why? What's wrong

BRIDGER
I'd rather tell Mr. Randall, ma'am.

LAURA
He's in the shower.

BRIDGER
Is it alright if I come in and wait?

After a moment Laura closes the door, several seconds pass, then she reopens it, unchained.

Bridger enters, glances around. Laura has quickly picked up the overturned chair, the blankets from the floor, and the handcuffs, but the room is still a mess. Bridger glances around at the general chaos, then looks up as:

WILL, steps out of the bathroom, towel around his waist, shaved and alert. He stops as he sees Bridger.

LAURA
Will...there's some kind of problem.

WILL WOL5048
I understand.

He smiles ingratiatingly at Bridger and moves to his pants, pulling out a wallet.

WILL
I'm Mr. Randall, I'm renting this room. If there were any complaints last night about the noise, and I'm assuming there were, I hope this will go part-way toward ameliorating...

He is trying to tuck a fifty-dollar bill into Bridger's coat pocket.

LAURA
Will, stop, he's not the hotel manager. He's a police detective.

Will steps back. The fifty flutters to the parquet floor.

BRIDGER
Can I have a word with you in private, Mr. Randall.

WILL
That's not necessary. Miss...Smith is my fiancee. She can hear anything you have to say.

BRIDGER
(glances at Laura; with the tiniest shrug)
Your wife was found dead this morning, Mr. Randall. I'm sorry. She was murdered sometime last night.

Will gasps.

WILL
What?

BRIDGER
I'm very sorry. Her body was found in the park, although the coroner thinks she wasn't killed there. The doorman said he saw her leave late last night.

Will is silent. Then...

WILL
How was she killed?

BRIDGER
Her throat was torn out.

Will's reels. Laura grabs his arm.

LAURA
(to Bridger)
Get a chair.

WILL
No. I don't want to sit.

BRIDGER
You okay?
(Will nods)
I wonder if you'd mind telling me when you saw your wife last, Mr. Randall.

WILL
Last...last night. Here. In the lobby. It was around seven... around seven...

BRIDGER
Did you argue?

LAURA
Don't answer anything else, Will.

BRIDGER
I'm just trying to check out a fact, Miss Smith. The clerk who was on last night said that Mr. Randall and his wife argued.

LAURA
So you already know that they argued.
(to Will)
These aren't straight questions. Just refuse to answer.

BRIDGER
I'd just like to ask Mr. Randall's whereabouts last night. Certainly that's a straight question.

LAURA
Mr. Randall was with me last night. All night. And I got here at 7:30 and didn't leave. You can check that with the desk.

BRIDGER
I have.

LAURA
Then there really isn't anything else to ask.

BRIDGER
Except where Mr. Randall went last night when he left here.

Will's head comes up, sharply.

LAURA
Bullshit. He's just fishing, Will. This is just how they chum the waters.
(to Bridger)
I'll swear to the fact that he was with me all night...

But Will has risen and gone to his clothes, now scattered on the floor. He picks up a muddy shoe, a blood-stained shirt.

WILL
I was out.

LAURA
No! Will...

WILL
I was out...and I killed something.

LAURA
Will! NO!

As Will speaks the startled Bridger, totally unprepared for this, quickly begins reciting Will's rights.

WILL
My shoes are muddy. There's blood on my shirt... I killed something... Dear God, I killed something...

BRIDGER
You have the right to remain silent...

LAURA
Please, stop!

BRIDGER
...You have the right to an attorney of your choice, you have the right....

WOL5048

INT. HOLDING CELL - AFTERNOON

At Manhattan Correctional Center, Central Booking. The cell is inhabited by about 30 men of every age and size. Will sits on a bench in the corner, huddled against the wall. He wears a wrinkled jacket and pants and an old shirt...and he is still the best dressed man in the cell. His beard is dark again and his thickening hair is uncombed. He sits, silently, looking at the floor.

The door opens and a new prisoner is led in, large and dangerous. The cell door closes behind him and he looks around and walks over to Will, who occupies a prime spot in the corner.

MAN
(to Will)
Move.

Will looks up, his eyes glowing, his ears flattened, his teeth bared, the hair on his neck raised.

MAN
...or don't. What the fuck do I care.

The man walks, with a face-saving swagger, over to the other bench, yanks the man sitting there to his feet, and sits.

The cell door slides open and C.O. looks in.

C.O.
William Randall? Visitor.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

Monitored by a C.O. in the next room, Will and Laura sit on opposite sides of a big wooden table. She hands him a book. Will takes it, numbly.

LAURA
I asked your secretary what you might want to read. Is this right?

WILL
(staring at it)
Yes, it's...
(he frowns)

LAURA
Updike. It's just something to look at until I get a lawyer and bail you out...

WILL
No. I don't want a lawyer.

LAURA
Tough. You're going to have one. Look--let's not jump to any crazy conclusions. You may have gone out last night but it doesn't mean you killed your wife.

WILL
She was found in the park. There was soil on my shoes, on my suit. Her throat was torn open. There was blood on my shirt...

LAURA
...which hasn't been tested yet. There was no blood on your hands and face.

WILL
I could have washed.
(he laughs harshly)
I could have washed. I could have killed...

LAURA
No, you couldn't. Will, if you <u>are</u> changing into a wolf you didn't kill her. It would be unthinkable for a wolf to harm it's mate. You're a good man. And a good man like you would become a good wolf.

WILL
(shaking his head)
Those rules don't apply to me...to this. This is not...any world we know... You have to accept that.

LAURA
Why? Why do you <u>have</u> to be guilty? Why does it always have to be the worst news, the worst pain, the worst defeat.

WILL
Because it <u>is</u>. This isn't a tumor or a brain lesion. It's really happening. And I can't stop it. I'm going to lose it all...I'm going to lose my awareness... my humanity. I would take any pain, any defeat, rather than that. I thank <u>God</u> I'm still human enough to feel guilty about killing my wife.

LAURA
(after a moment)
I know you didn't kill her, but if you did--we'll get through it.

As the C.O. comes to take Will away, she rises quickly and is gone.

WOL5048

INT. WILL'S CELL - LATER

Will is no longer in the holding room. He is alone in a cell, crouches in the corner with the book Laura brought him. He studies the jacket, almost reluctant to look inside... then he opens the book and studies a page, brow slowly furrowing.

INSERT - BOOK PAGE

The text, to Will, looks like this:

INSERT PAGE
Grohgrry tu fghe bacjgowrd. Ghe tob du braybreey tghroed the ja. Fo there jare not ehy guyre hebtions gf jog ggame, wg tyris utep.

BACK TO WILL

He squeezes his eyes closed, then opens them and surveys the page again. It is the same. He is motionless for a second...then suddenly he gives a long, high inarticulate cry that is so filled with horror it brings the C.O. running, startles the men in the other cells.

He begins tearing the pages--shredding them all, frantically, futilely.

TIME CUT:

Will is curled in a dark corner, on his blanket. His stubble is now almost a beard, his limbs are folded under him in the manner of a dog; he twitches in his sleep.

INT. VISITING ROOM - LATER

Laura and Will sit opposite each other, separated by a scratched plexiglass partition; they communicate over telephones. Will, looks severely debilitated. His eyes are dull. He rests his head against the plastic, which grotesquely flattens and stretches one side of his face.

LAURA
...A couple of hitches but I'll have you out in a day or two. And they might wind up dismissing the case entirely. Forensics apparently screwed up the blood samples, they're unusable...and it's crucial evidence...
(Will does not react; his eyes wander)
Just two days more, Will...two days more and you'll be free. Can you take it?

He says nothing...then, after a long silence, he whispers:

WILL
It's hot.

His voice is constricted, cheeks glazed with sweat...his breathing is heavy, as though he's slowly suffocating.

LAURA
Will...listen to me. Imagine. Imagine you're already free. You're somewhere cold, vast. Are you listening ..?
(he does not answer but his eyes focus on her)
There's a place up in Newfoundland, called Labrador, it's still wild: Fjords up and down the coast, heavy forests inland... shimmering lakes and rushing rivers and wolves,

[redacted]

packs of them, roaming...
(he is fastened on her now)
...and you're there, now, just picture it, you're part of the
(MORE)

LAURA (cont'd)
landscape, you belong, you've been there forever...
(his breathing has become steadier now)
When you're hungry you eat... When you're sleepy you dig a shallow bed in the dirt, line it with leaves, curl up and rest...

He draws his head away from the partition and speaks with great effort.

WILL
... And where ... are you

LAURA
With you.

INT. WILL'S CELL - LATER

Will listlessly paces, occasionally rubbing his gut, then settles on a spot on which to lie... Then, too hungry to rest, he struggles up again, goes to the bars, and waits...

As if on cue a C.O. comes down the hall with a tray in one hand, dragging his truncheon along the bars with the other.

C.O.
Chow.

WOL5048

He crouches and slides a cardboard bowl through a slot made in the bars, for this purpose. Will picks up the bowl and begins lapping up the gruel... his eyes close as he eats.

INT. ALDEN ESTATE - EVENING

Alden sits in the den in one of the large leather chairs, watching a TV Newscaster, the remote in one hand.

TV NEWSCASTER
...shocking murder of his wife. He is also being linked to another Central Park incident in which a young man's fingers were torn from his hand when he tried to flee from a knife-wielding assailant. Meanwhile, park authorities are warning against another kind of danger. The half-eaten bodies of several birds and small mammals may indicate the presence of a wild animal in...

Laura enters and Alden, seeing her, clicks off the set.

LAURA
I want to talk to you.
(he nods)
They've set Will's bail at a million dollars. It will take a little time to dissolve the assets in my trust--will you advance it to me?

ALDEN
No.

LAURA
I'll pay you back in a week.

ALDEN
It's not the money. It's the fact that you're about to get involved with a man who's almost twice your age and who, in all probability, killed his wife by tearing out her throat. That's a new level of self-destructiveness, even for you.

LAURA
I don't think he killed his wife. And I think he's sick. I think he has some kind of growth...

ALDEN
Laura, whatever he's got, you're about to walk into hell with a man you barely know.

LAURA
I love him

ALDEN
No, you don't. You're excited by him. He's like a sick, wild animal that will only let <u>you</u> near him...like all the animals you nursed. Except that he's a man. And you'll get tired of nursing him and try to leave him, as his wife did, and he'll kill you.

LAURA
So? What do you care?

ALDEN
What do I <u>care</u>?

LAURA
Yes. It's not like your days will be empty without my company. My company is something you've avoided
(MORE)

LAURA (cont'd)
since I was twelve. It will be exactly the same for you except you won't have to spend all that money getting me out of trouble, and you won't have to ask me how I am every few days. So give me the million, I'll sign my whole trust over to you and you'll make a little profit on the deal.

ALDEN
(staring at her)
You can't believe what you're saying to me.

LAURA
Why? It's no big deal. Most animals don't hang around after their young can feed themselves.

ALDEN
I am not an animal. You are not an animal. My God, Laura, do you know how you've hurt me?

LAURA
Will you give me the money?

ALDEN
No.

WOL5048

LAURA
Then, apparently, not enough.

INT. WILL'S JAIL CELL

He lies in the corner with his eyes closed, curled canine-style on the floor. His beard is fuller now, his hair wild, his face filthy. His breathing is irregular, shallow.

The sound of the C.O.'s truncheon along the bars echoes through the cell, but Will does not open his eyes. Even when the guard appears and slides the cardboard bowl through the slot, Will does not move. He lies on his side, panting like a dying animal.

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - EVENING

Laura and Keyes stand before him.

LAURA
I'm posting bail for Mr. Randall. Mr. Keyes, as my fiduciary, is authorized to write a check for the million dollars, from my trust.

The Judge glances at Keyes, who nods.

JUDGE
Well...bail has been set. I have no option but to release the prisoner to you. However, I do strongly recommend, on the basis of the police report and the prisoner's subsequent behaviour, that he be submitted for psychiatric evaluation.

KEYES
We plan to do that, your honor. Miss Alden is in the process of selecting a psychiatrist now.

The Judge nods, thoughtfully.

JUDGE
Well...let's get on with it.

EXT. MANHATTEN CORRECTIONAL CENTER - DAY

REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS flock in front of the building, waiting for Will to emerge. There is a burst of SOUND and movement as Will walks out the door with Keyes and Laura and two policeman. Cameras move forward, a mob of newsmen push in on him, mikes are thrust in front of their faces.

NEWSMAN
Will!--are you going to plead guilty?...

NEWSMAN
Laura!--are you and Will engaged...

ANOTHER NEWSMAN
Will--do you have any theories on who...

ANOTHER NEWSMAN
Laura, look this way...over here, Laura...

ANOTHER NEWSMAN
Were you and your wife living together, Will...

ANOTHER NEWSMAN
Tell us why you did it, Will...

ANOTHER NEWSMAN
How does it feel to know...

ANOTHER MAN
Will--look at the camera, Will. Will!

Will suddenly lunges forward, knocking over two newsmen and smashing a cameraman to the ground before Laura, Keyes and the three policeman grab him.

INT./EXT. RANGE ROVER (MOVING)

Laura shoots onto the West Side Highway, heading north. The faint first light of day illuminates the Hudson.

Will sits beside her, his head back against the seat. He looks drained. He inhales deeply.

LAURA
Smell that? It's New Jersey.

WILL
It smells good.

LAURA
That's the first thing you've said that makes me think you may be turning into a wolf.

He does not laugh, does not even smile. His eyes are fastened to the passing landscape.

LAURA
Now here's what I want you to keep in mind while we drive. Thick, rare, steak...barbecued, charred and crusty on the outside, rare and juicy on the inside... God, I'm starving.

WILL
I don't want to go back to prison.

LAURA
No. You won't. I won't let it happen.

W01.5048

WILL
If I killed her...I want to be put down. I won't be able to do it later... Will you?

LAURA
(after a moment)
I won't let you be locked up again.

WILL
(closing his eyes)
Thank you.
(after a moment)
I should have told Charlotte I wanted a child. I was so worried I would force her into a choice...

LAURA
Don't let the "shoulds" get you. They're never true. I've always felt I should have told my mother to get a check-up every year. And I was eleven. We all have such...

WILL
I wonder where those caves lead.

LAURA
What?

WILL
There were some caves back there. I wondered...
(he sniffs)
Someone's built a fire. There must be a campsite around here.

LAURA
(her eyes are anxious, her voice very cheery)
After you've rested and I've fed you, bathed you and, above all, brushed your teeth, I want us to fly back to the place where your car hit the wolf. Have you ever flown in a helicopter? With a beautiful licensed pilot who can open handcuffs?

WILL
(seriously trying to remember)
I don't think so.

LAURA
Well, then--I'll be the first. See, I think there must be other instances of this...this thing that's happening to you. You can't be the only one in the world who's been bitten. Maybe...whatever it is...maybe we can find a way to treat it, even reverse it.

WILL
(idly)
Yes. That would be good. But the best thing may be not to fight it so hard... I think when I just give in to it that slows it way down, when I just ... give in to it.

Laura stares straight ahead. They have traded places now. Will's eyes seem clear, unafraid. Laura's eyes are terrified.

EXT. ALDEN ESTATE

As the land rover drives up to the gate. The guard steps out and waves.

GUARD
Good afternoon, Miss Alden...and Mr. Randall. Nice to see you again, sir.

WILL
(trying to place him)
Nice to...see you.

MONTAGE:

Laura grooming Will:

BATHTUB - as LAURA scrubs Will down and he sputters and struggles. She smiles now, busy and happy. It is all so normal.

BATHROOM - WILL as he sits in a chair, his eyes closed as Laura carefully shaves him.

PATIO - WILL watching as the steaks sizzle on the barbecue...it is all he can do to keep from snatching them off the flame.

EXT. THE GROUNDS - WILL, LAURA

He is shaved, and clean, and fed. Laura watches him as he looks around the vast green stretch of land, his eyes filled with the pleasure of it. A groundsmen comes up to them.

GROUNDSMAN
I'd be careful of the woods, Miss Alden. We think we may have some wolves getting past the fence.

LAURA
(startled)
What do you mean?

WOL5048

GROUNDSMAN
We found a deer last week. Something brought him down. We think...

LAURA
Why didn't you tell me.

GROUNDSMAN
(startled at her tone)
You were in the city...

LAURA
So I was. I'm sorry, Ted. Thanks for warning me. I'll be careful.

The Groundsman nods, relieved, and walks off.

WILL
May I...go alone? into the woods? I won't hurt anything.

LAURA
Well, of course you won't. You don't have to tell me that...and you don't have to ask...

WILL
I think I only hunt at night...kill at night. And I've eaten...

LAURA
Will, don't be ridiculous. Every dead deer isn't your doing.

She stands watching as he moves swiftly away, glad to be free, even of her.

INT- LAURA'S COTTAGE - EARLY EVENING

Shadows are falling. Laura sits motionless at the window. The phone rings. She picks it up, after a moment, with a kind of dread.

LAURA
Yes?

ALDEN'S VOICE
How are you?

LAURA
I'm fine.

ALDEN'S VOICE
I wondered...if you and Will would care to have dinner with me?

LAURA
I wouldn't. And Will is out. I'll ask him when I see him.

She hangs up. The phone barely hits the cradle when it rings again. She snatches it up, angrily.

LAURA
Yes? What did you forget to say?

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DETECTIVE BRIDGER

sits staring at the phone, taken aback. The following scene is INTERCUT.

BRIDGER
Miss Alden, this is Detective Bridger ...

LAURA
Oh. Yes. Mr. Randall is out right now...

BRIDGER
Well...I'd just as soon talk to you. The lab has had a peculiar problem with some of the tissue and blood samples we recoverd from Mrs. Randall's body...

LAURA
Yes. I heard.

BRIDGER
...and they've had the same problem with the tissue and blood specimens we took from Mr. Randall. So...I wondered if you could get Mr. Randall down here for another sample.

LAURA
What happened to the samples? I'm not really clear on that.
(a pause)
Don't start this shit, Bridger. I have a lot of money and Mr. Randall has already submitted to extensive tests. Either answer my questions or I'll get five lawyer to delay this proceedure as long as...

WOL5048

BRIDGER
Take it easy. I was just trying to figure out how to say it. Nobody knows exactly what happened...but all the samples have traces of animal DNA, canine maybe. We don't know what it means...it may mean the victim was attacked by some kind of animal after she was killed, or it may mean one of the lab assistants has a dog and forgot to wash her hands.

There is a pause.

BRIDGER'S VOICE
Miss Alden?

LAURA
(she clears her throat)
I'll tell Mr. Randall...and call you back.

She hangs up. Her eyes are wide and fixed. Now she knows.

INT. LAURA'S COTTAGE - DUSK

She sits on the shaggy, untended ribbon of lawn outside her cottage, her forehead resting on her knees. She does not hear Will as he come up to her.

WILL
Laura...

Her head shoots up. She stares at him.

WILL
Don't look at me like that. I just walked.
(he shows his hands)
See? Not even dirty.

LAURA
Will, the samples they recovered from your wife's body and the samples you volunteered...both had animal DNA.

Will sharply inhales.

LAURA
They think the lab contaminated both batches. They want new samples. I just...
(wearily)
I didn't know what to say.

WILL
(sitting down next to her)
Well...there's no sense giving them any more samples. We know what they'll find. I think it's best that I be put down now...

LAURA
No, please..
(she begins to weep)

WILL
(putting his arm around her)
I don't want to be locked up. I'd die anyway. And I can't be allowed to live if I'm a murderer.
(she starts to speak)
No, no, no...there's no question about it anymore. The samples weren't contaminated. Blood and tissue samples from both the victim and the suspect don't accidentaly get contaminated with animal DNA.

LAURA
Let them take another sample. Maybe if they know what's happening...

WILL
It will be the same. No matter what they know I will never again be free. You're too kind to let that happen to me. And you promised... you promised you wouldn't let it happen.

LAURA
I could free you now. You could escape.

WILL
You don't want that, do you? I'm dangerous. I could hurt someone, kill someone. Help me... If you love me help me to die while I still care enough to do it.

LAURA
(slowly)
But not today...

WILL
Why not?

WOL5048

LAURA
Because I can't today. My God, give me a chance to understand it, to accept it. Give me a chance to say goodbye.

Will looks up. The moon is beginning to glow, in a pale purple sky. He turns back to her.

WILL
It's almost night.

LAURA
I'll lock you up. Can you bear it for one more night? I'll see to it that you can't escape, that you can't hurt anyone. But please don't ask me to do more right now. I just...can't.

INT. LAURA COTTAGE NIGHT - NIGHT

She is awake, alone. The phone rings and she goes to it. It is Bridger.

BRIDGER'S VOICE
Mr. Randall, please.

LAURA
He's...not back yet. I'll take the message.

BRIDGER'S VOICE
Miss Alden, I have the necessary papers to bring Mr. Randall in for new tests. Are you going to make me serve them?

LAURA
(after a moment)
Detective Bridger...may I talk to you tomorrow...at your office. Please. And then I'll bring Mr. Randall in.

BRIDGER'S VOICE
Well...I can't cut any deals with you.

LAURA
I understand. Tomorrow at...

BRIDGER'S VOICE
Three.

There is a click and a dial tone. Laura hangs up the phone...then rises.

EXT. GROUNDS - LAURA

a coat over her shoulders as she walks toward the barn.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Laura, using one of the keys on her chain, opens the outside door.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Laura reaches the single stall, on the outskirts of the property, kept warm by the sort of "heat tree" one finds on restaurant patios.

Will's face is pressed against the bars of the stall. He wears a strained smile. His tone is very pleasant, very normal, full of sanity and self-control. But It takes a certain amount of concentration for him to articulate his words.

WILL
Hello, darling. How are you?

LAURA
Fine. Are you alright?

WILL
Yes. This is silly, darling, don't you agree? Locking a man in a cage, like an animal. Especially a man of my background, my sensibility

He gives Laura an absurd shrug. She's uncertain, but keeps her distance.

LAURA
Well...you were so worried that you were dangerous. You were so afraid you'd hurt me.

WILL
Darling, don't be so literal ... Please, I won't bother you, I have work to do, I'm way behind in my work.

LAURA
Really? What do you do, Will?

WILL
I... Why, I... You know what I do, dear, I'm an important man, what the fuck is the problem here, just let me out of this stinking barn before I tear this fucking place apart. Darling.

Laura holds a little white pill between her fingers.

LAURA
I brought this to to help you sleep. I used to pop these in my pre-clinic days. It's one of the great tranquilizers.

WOL5048

WILL
(smiling, suavely)
But I'm tranquil, dear.

LAURA
Well...take it anyway. How tranquil can you be locked in a stall?

WILL
I'd rather have you in here than a pill. That would make me tranquil.

LAURA
Take it, Will. Then we'll talk.

He slips an arm through the bars as far as it can go, which is just past the wrist. Laura puts the pill in his palm, and --

Will grabs her hand, then yanks her forward, forcing her up against the bars.

WILL
Let me out.

LAURA
Will...

WILL
Let me OUT. I have to GET OUT.
LET ME OUT!

With her free hand, Laura swats his face with the key ring with everything she's got. Will lets go with a GROWL and she turns and runs out of the barn.

INT. LAURA'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

She lies awake, looking up at the ceiling, tears streaming down her face.

EXT. STALL - MORNING

Laura peers through the bars. Will is curled in the corner on a straw bed, sleeping. After a moment, he wakens and stares at her, frowning.

WILL
... Laura ..?

When she hears the tone of his voice she unlocks the stall, opens it. But she doesn't venture inside. Will sits up and gently rubs his swollen jaw, where she walloped him:

WILL
God, I must have run into a wall last night. I have all this pain. So much pain.

He walks out of the stall and stretches like an animal. Laura goes to him and strokes his bruised and stubbly cheek...then hands him a cloth case, like a picnic case.

LAURA
I have to drive into the city to see Bridger or he'll come out here. He got some kind of writ. I'll be gone most of the day. There are sleeping pills and vodka in this bag. If you want the pills to stay down take them very slowly. Take them with the vodka.

WILL
Okay.

LAURA
The groundsmen patrol the grounds until six. So don't take them before then.

WILL
Alright.

They stare at each other for a long moment. Then she kisses him and goes out.

EXT. WEST SIDE HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

The Range Rover in light traffic, heading south. From this distance, in this light, the skyline rises up, glittering in the sunlight.

INT. LAND ROVER - LAURA

as she drives her face is expressionless, her eyes empty.

EXT. ONE POLICE PLAZA - AFTERNOON

Laura walks across the plaza, then inside Manhattan police headquarters.

INT. HOMICIDE DEPARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Crowded with irritable people who sit waiting on uncomfortable chairs. Laura goes up to the RECEPTIONIST:

LAURA
Laura Alden, for Detective Bridger.

RECEPTIONIST
He's running behind. Sit down.

Laura looks around: there are no empty chairs. From behind her, she HEARS:

STEWART'S VOICE
Here, Miss Alden... take my seat.

LAURA
(she turns)
No, that's alright.

WOL5048

STEWART
Please.

LAURA
No. I want to stand.

Stewart has subtly changed. His beard is darker, eyes narrower. He smiles at Laura.

STEWART
You don't know me, do you? I'm Stewart Swinton.

LAURA
No.

STEWART
I'm a very close friend of Will Randall's.
(she looks at him)
And I...I just want to thank you and your father for what you've done in his behalf.

He smiles, showing teeth that are prominent and sharp.

STEWART
This was such a terrible, terrible thing. First Charlotte...and then Will. I know it has to be a mistake. I know it. Will is the gentlest man in the world. I'm just...in shock over this. I mean, Will was more than a friend and a colleague. He was my mentor.

Laura nods, slowly. She has been staring at him, studying him.

LAURA
And you were his ... "protege."

STEWART
Yes. A better word.
(he takes her hand)
This is a true pleasure.

He lifts her hand to his lips...then stops..and holds it a few inches from his face. Then he looks up...and sees her staring at the bandage on his hand, the thickening hair around it.

STEWART
What an interesting scent you have, Miss Alden. At once new and familiar. Very familiar.

LAURA
Well..thank you. I hope it's pleasant...
(her eyes on his hand)
Were you bitten?

STEWART
What?

LAURA
Were you bitten?

STEWART
What an odd question. No, I cut myself.
(he laughs, loudly)

(MORE)

STEWART (cont'd)
What a very odd question.
(he has not let go of her hand)
What made you ask such a question?

LAURA
I...don't know. People...when people get bitten...they're very often bitten...on the hand. I have to go now, Mr. Swinton...I forgot an appointment...

She takes another step back and tries to withdraws her hand.

STEWART
You're very lovely, Miss Alden. But, of course, you know that. I hope this doesn't sound impertinent..but would you have a drink with me after you're done here? I'd really like to talk about Will with someone who knows him.

LAURA 03-5048
(smiling, woodenly)
Well, I don't really know him that well. My father, actually, arranged for his release. But thank you, that's very sweet...

Now Bridger sticks his head out of his office. He looks sweaty, harassed. He SHOUTS:

BRIDGER
"Stewart Swinton" --!

Stewart bows, turns to the detective. And Laura heads for the door.

INT. CORRIDOR - LAURA

She races to the elevator, hits the button and looks at her watch. It is 4:00. She presses both buttons, slams her fist against the elevator door, then runs to the door marked exit and opens it.

LAURA
Oh, God, let me get there in time...

INT. BRIDGER'S OFFICE

Stewart's legs are crossed, the one on top impatiently jiggling as Bridger opens a fresh notepad to the first page.

BRIDGER
Was there anything odd in Mr. Randall's behaviour? Had he changed in any way?

A beat, then:

STEWART
Why don't you ask, Miss Alden. He's staying at her father's estate, isn't he?

BRIDGER
I'm asking you...

EXT. WEST SIDE HIGHWAY

It is jammed with late afternoon traffic.

INT. RANGE ROVER

Laura sits pressing her body forward against the wheel, as if by sheer force she can move the cars ahead of her. She looks at her watch. It is 4:30.

INT. BRIDGER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Several pages on Bridger's pad have been flipped back now. Stewart sits, erect, rigid, forcing himself to be still.

BRIDGER
Or can you recall Randall ever discussing feelings of rage, toward his wife--

STEWART
Yes. Look...Will Randall was almost insane when his wife was murdered. He picked a fight with me...he bit me...he actually urinated on my shoe. I think he was temporarily insane and I'm going to testify to that effect in his defense. Now is that it?

BRIDGER
It's "it," when I'm finished.

EXT. HIGHWAY - RANGE ROVER

Up ahead is the bottleneck--road construction. Yellow markers line the highway and a construction worker signals which cars can go ahead, which cars can stop.

LAURA
Move...MOVE...!

The clock on the dashboard says 4:57.

INT. BRIDGER'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON (LATER)

Stewart has now risen, shifting impatiently, his eyes darting to the door as Bridger speaks.

BRIDGER
And you'll contact us if you should hear from him, Or remember anything...

STEWART
Count on it.

His hand is wrapped around the doorknob. Bridger says, casually:

BRIDGER
Mr. Swinton, did you know Charlotte Randall?

([redacted]) (STEWART)
Of course. Lovely woman. Good wife. Very much in love with Will.

Bridger nods, and jots a note in his pad.

EXT. WEST SIDE HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Laura's car is now the next in line in front of the yellow markers.

INT. RANGE ROVER WOL5048

The clock on the dashboard says 5:15. Laura's face glistens with sweat. Her knuckles are white on the wheel.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The car in front of Laura's gets the go-ahead and passes through. Laura starts forward...almost makes it...and then the construction worker holds up his hand.

INT. RANGE ROVER

LAURA
Oh, don't give me that shit.

She puts her foot on the gas and zooms ahead. The construction worker jumps back with a yell, the yellow markers go down like pins.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The construction worker stands in the middle of the road, screaming:

MAN
Get the license number! Get her license number!

But she is gone...and there are no police cars to back up the construction worker's traffic control. He continues to scream after Laura's car...but there is nothing he can do.

INT. BMW (MOVING) - LATE AFTERNOON

Stewart drives with his face thrust forward, his eyes squinting. He is the eternal predator...in a BMW.

INT./EXT RANGE ROVER - RACING

Laura's face is set and damp. The clock in the car reads 5:45.

LAURA
Oh, God, please--just this one thing. Nothing else. Ever.

INT./EXT STEWART'S BMW

He pulls up near the construction site. There is a police are parked there now. Stewart glances at his watch, swears softly.

EXT. ALDEN ESTATE - LATE AFTERNOON

George the Gatekeeper steps out to wave Laura through, then jumps aside as she races past him without slowing.

INT. GROUNDS - LAURA

as she runs, runs, calling..."Will!" She looks at her watch. It is 6:05.

LAURA
WILL!

She turns, helplessly...looking at the immense estate...and then begins to run again.

ANGLE - LAURA RUNNING

toward the hill. Up the hill. At the top of the hill...she sees Will. He looks up as he sees her. He is holding the liquor and the pills.

LAURA
Did you take anything yet.

WILL
(embarrassed)
Is it six? I looked at my watch...but I couldn't figure out how to tell time.

She bursts into wild sobs.

WILL
But I'll take them now. Look. Laura...I'm taking them.

She grabs his hand.

LAURA
You didn't kill her, Will. It was Stewart. Your "protege", Stewart. I saw him today. He had a bandage on his hand...and the hair around it was thick. And his eyes...and he... Did you bite him, Will? Is it possible that you bit Stewart?

Will frowns, then suddenly:

WILL
Yes! That night ... I bit him.

Her body sags, she falls against him, almost too weak to stand. He puts his arms around her.

LAURA
You didn't kill her, Will. You did not kill your wife.

He stares at her.

WOL5048

WILL
...Stewart killed her ..?

LAURA
Yes. Stewart. Killed her. Stewart killed Charlotte ... You don't have to die. You don't have to die, Will.

He stands looking down at the pills...then he looks at at Laura.

WILL
Then...what should I do.

LAURA
(she takes his hand)
Nothing. You don't have to do anything. Just wait. I'll lock you in at night until it happens...and then I'll take you some place where you'll be free. Once it happens it will be alright. Right now you're in limbo. You're in between worlds...that's why it's so bewildering.

WILL
But I'll be...something else then. I won't have you. I'll lose you.

LAURA
No. You'll never lose me. "Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,/But bears it out even to the edge of doom."
(he stares at her; she looks at him, proudly)
I remembered.

WILL
Oh, Laura...I don't know what you mean.

LAURA
(she closes her eyes)
It means...I will always love you. I will always love you, Will.

EXT. MAIN GATE - NIGHT

The black BMW pulls up, stops. The guard leans down.

GUARD
Help you, sir?

Stewart rolls open the tinted window.

STEWART
Little pig, little pig, let me come in.

The guard blinks.

GUARD
Pardon?
(he peers in the car)
Oh, Mr. Swinton. I didn't recognize you.

STEWART
(looking at the guard's name tag)
"George"...I'm here to see Miss Alden, George.

GUARD
May I ask your business with Miss Alden, sir?

STEWART
My business is pleasure, George. Does she look like the fuck of the decade or what?

The guard stares at him in total disbelief for a moment... then says, gruffly:

GUARD

Back up.

STEWART

Alright.

Stewart backs up his BMW...then puts it in, drive, aims the nose at George, and floors it. George's body disappears under the car as Stewart crashes through the gate.

EXT. GROUNDS - STEWART

He is out of the car now, moving quietly over the lawn, his eyes glittering and yellow in the darkness.

A security man suddenly steps out of the shadows, and approaches him. There is a radio receiver in the security man's pocket next to a holster...which his hand rests on.

SECURITY MAN

Excuse me, Sir--

STEWART

(pleasantly)
Hello. I'm here to see Miss Alden. Can you tell me where to find her?

SECURITY MAN

(frowning)
The gate didn't call to say you were coming...

STEWART

Really? Well, I have a card and an appointment...here..

He reaches into his pocket and holds out a card. The security man takes his hand off the gun and reaches for it...and Stewart, in one lightning move, lunges forward and tears out his thorax.

EXT. BARN - LAURA

She is just pulling the door shut. As she turns to put the key into the lock a hand is clamped over her mouth...and we see Stewart's face behind her.

STEWART

Hello, Miss Alden. May I call you Laura?

Laura blinks furiously--and stands very still.

STEWART

If you scream I'll kill you. I'll just break your neck. Okay?

Laura nods and he takes his hand away from her mouth. She turns. Her face seems absolutely calm.

LAURA
This... is a surprise. How did you get in without an appointment?

STEWART
(straight faced)
I smooth-talked the guard.

LAURA
(she smiles)
Well, if anyone could do it...

STEWART
Now, Laura, rich and lovely Laura, don't play games with me. You know, don't you?

LAURA
Know what?

STEWART
What's happening to me. You know I've been bitten. Will told you, didn't he?

LAURA WOL5048
No.

STEWART
You're playing games with me. And I asked you not to. Now don't. It just makes me furious.

LAURA
(she laughs)
Alright. Will told me. But only when I said "Are there any more at home like you?".

STEWART
(he studies her; shrewdly)
I see. You find me very attactive, right? So I really don't have anything to worry about when it comes to your...talking about this.

LAURA
That's right.

STEWART
I'm not a fool, Laura.

LAURA
I know.

STEWART
If you find me so attractive how about my fucking you to death right now, darling, how would that be?

LAURA
I don't know. I'd have to try it.

STEWART
You're very good. Come here.

She leans against the barn door and smiles.

LAURA
Come get me.

As he lunges for her she presses back, pushing the barn door open, so that Stewart hurls forward into space. She shoves the lit space stove over, on top of him and, as he struggles to get up, she runs toward the other end of the barn, screaming:

LAURA
-- Will

She reaches the stall Will is locked in, but Stewart has scrambled to his feet...and as she is about to put the key in the padlock, he bounds forward, almost flying, and lands on top of her, bringing her down. The key drops from her hand, two feet from the stall.

Stewart looks over at Will.

STEWART
Why, hello, Will. Locked you up, did she? Locked up the leader of Macleish House.

Will thrusts his arm through the bars trying to reach Stewart. Stewart laughs and steps back.

STEWART
I owe you for everything, Will. What a debt.
(he grabs Laura by the throat)
Is she your's?
(to Laura)
Are you his?
(she gasps for air; to Will)
Well, now she's mine.

Stewart tears open Laura's skirt as she struggles. Will sees the key to the padlock lying outside the stall and shoves his arm through the bars, trying to reach it. Stewart kicks it away.

STEWART
No. I'm going to fuck her, Will. Then I'm going to kill her. Then I'm going to kill you. And it will still be less than you deserve.

He grabs Laura's blouse and yanks it open, then makes a little sound of approval.

Will slams himself against the stall door. But it will not yield. He looks up at the top of the wall that encloses the stall but it is twelve feet and made of bars, too high to jump, too smooth to climb.

Stewart pushes Laura down, then tugs open his trousers. The sound of his breathing mingles with the repeated thud of Will's body hitting the door.

With each impact Will begins to take on more and more of the aspect of a wolf...as if the frenzy of his struggle is speeding the transformation.

Laura screams as Stewart puts a hand under her waist, pulls her to her knees and begins to mount her...and then, there is a growl so loud, so vicious, that Stewart turns...in time to see Will, now almost completely a wolf, spring up and, in one unbelievable leap, clear the wall of the stall.

He lands almost on top of Stewart, his fangs exposed, snarling, his eyes blazing. Stewart scrambles back and grabs a shovel...then brings it down on Will's face. Will, bleeding, goes down, seemingly stunned. And as Stewart raises the shovel to strike him again, Will springs.

Stewart pitches backward and falls to the ground, face up, helpless as Will lands on him. He looks up at Will's snarling mouth and bared teeth, then lifts his chin, exposing his throat in a gesture of surrender. Will stops, poised over the soft flesh...and then reaches down and tears opens Stewart's throat.

Stewart's body gives a long violent shudder, and then it relaxes in death. Will moves off him. He is torn and bleeding from Stewart's blows and from his leap over the wall. Laura kneels beside him.

WOL 5048

WILL
I can't hold on to it, Laura...

LAURA
I know. It's not your world anymore. Let it go.

She reaches out and lightly strokes his mouth...then, suddenly, slips her hand inside his mouth and forces his jaw shut, driving his teeth into her flesh, drawing blood. She winces just slightly from the pain as she pulls out her hand.

LAURA
Let go now, Will. It's alright. I'm going to be with you now. I'm going to get us away from here. I'm going to get help, Will...and we're going to be together. Just let go...

INT/EXT. A POLICE CAR

Bridger and a 2nd cop sit inside. Bridger is fuming. The 2nd cop is driving, peering into the night.

2ND COP
It's so fucking dark.

BRIDGER
Keep going.

2ND COP
Can't this wait until daylight... when we can see.

BRIDGER
No! I mean, I bent over backwards for this bimbo. I told her I wouldn't serve the writ until after she talked to me today and I had fifty fucking appointments and I shoved her in and she never fucking showed up. You know why? Because she's rich. Because the fucking rich think they can get away with murder. You know why? Because they can.

2ND COP
Well, we'll be up until two in the morning looking for this joint so that ought to teach her a lesson.

BRIDGER
Just drive. It's the size of Staten Island, we'll find it.

INT. ALDEN HOUSE

Alden sits in his library, reading through a stack of papers, making notes in the margin. His eyes widen in alarm as Laura runs in, her clothes torn, dirty, her hair wild.

ALDEN
What happened? Did you fall?

LAURA
Help me.

ALDEN
But what happened...

LAURA
Will's sick. I want to take him to the cabin...and I don't want you to tell the police about it. I don't want them to know it exists.

ALDEN
Well, first of all, I'm sure one of the conditions of Randall's bail is that he doesn't leave the state, and second of all...

LAURA
It's my bail money. Not yours. Please. I can't let him be locked up again. He'll die

ALDEN
And second of all, I don't want you alone in an isolated cabin with a possible murderer.

LAURA
He isn't a murderer. Stewart Swinton murdered Charlotte. Not Will.

WOL5048

ALDEN
Really? Who told you that--Will?

LAURA
Oh, God, why can't you believe me. Why can't you ever believe me. Stewart Swinton murdered Will's wife. He just tried to murder me. He's in the barn. Will...killed him. They fought. Will was hurt. I've got to get him away now...

ALDEN
Are you crazy? Are you, at last, totally mad?

LAURA
He saved me. Will saved me. Please believe me!

ALDEN
I don't believe you. What I do believe is that Will Randall just committed another murder and you're trying to help him get away with it.

LAURA
(she stares at him)
How hopeless it is. You were my one hope. All my life...you were my one hope. I just can't get it through my head that you're never going to come through.

He whirls on her... but before he can speak there is a small crash of sound as the door is suddenly flung open and a breathless Filipino servant stands there.

SERVANT
I'm very sorry. And excuse me. A detective is outside. He says George has been badly hurt...

Alden leaps up and runs past him, out of the room. Laura stands pressed against the wall, eyes closed, as if waiting to be shot.

INT. ALDEN HOUSE - FOYER

Alden stands listening as Bridger's words rush out.

BRIDGER
...we've called for a back-up and an ambulance. They should both be here any minute. But the gate guard is in bad shape and the security man is dead.

ALDEN
But why would Randall try and kill the gate guard? He was already inside...on the estate.

BRIDGER
We think he made an appointment to meet Stewart Swinton here. We think Swinton is somewhere on the estate. The gate guard's statement was...
(flipping open a notepad and reading aloud)
"Guard: 'He didn't have an appointment'. Bridger: 'Who didn't have an appointment?' Guard: 'Swinton'".

Bridger closes the notepad. Alden looks out at the grounds through the long foyer window as Bridger talks on. Carlights are now visible...as half a dozen police cars drive on to the grounds.

BRIDGER
...That's all we could get before he passed out. But it's enough so that...

ALDEN
(abruptly; to the Filipino servant)
Mark, get my rifle.
(to Bridger)
I think I can help you find Will Randall.

INT. ALDEN DEN - LAURA

She stands pressed back against the wall, waiting for the door to open and Alden to lead Bridger in. Instead she hears the sound of the front door slamming. She stands stock still for a moment then runs to the window.

OUTSIDE she sees her father on the lawn, cradling a rifle, and waving toward the dozen or so cops who run toward him from their cars.

She turns and runs out of the house.

EXT. GUEST COTTAGE

Alden leads the small army of cops forward. Bridger hurries to stay abreast of him as Alden issues crisp orders in the form of suggestions.

ALDEN
I'd send some men around the back of the cottage...to make sure they don't get out that way. Post some men by the windows...easy to get out those windows. And then send some men inside. Quietly.

#0L5048

Bridger waves to the men who stand waiting for guidance. They gather around him, immediately and he gives them their instructions, tersely, like a quarterback.

BRIDGER
You, you--back door. You, you--side windows. You, you--other side windows. You two--gain entry...

As he speaks the men peel off to their assigned positions. When they are in place--the last two men step up to the front door, guns drawn, and one of them pounds on the door.

1ST COP
Police--open up!

No answer. He pounds again. Waits. Then he kicks the door open and both cops leap inside and assume the position.

As they stand there, looking tensely around, we HEAR a THWACK-THWACK that quickly intensifies. The cops, turn, look up.

A HELICOPTER

rises, from the opposite corner of the Alden estate.

BACK TO SCENE

All the cops are now looking up at the chopper.

BRIDGER
Get down to where that chopper took off! You! Put in a call to Air Control...see if they can track it...

The men run off. Bridger turns to Alden who's watching the helicopter's ascent.

BRIDGER
You knew this was going to happen.

ALDEN
(drawing himself up)
Be careful what you say.

BRIDGER
Fuck you. Sue me!

ALDEN
I wouldn't want to do that. You seem to be a very good police officer.

BRIDGER
I don't get this! I know your daughter's stuck on the guy but she's a kid. You're a grown man. And this is a man who killed his wife and one of your security men, who critically wounded a guard...

ALDEN
No. That would be Stewart Swinton. You see, I know George, he's a Vermont man. And I know if Stewart Swinton didn't have an appointment he would have to kill George to get on the estate. Which I think is exactly what he tried to do. I also know that he tried to murder my daughter...because she told me so. And she also told me that Will Randall saved her life by killing him. So, you might try looking for Swinton in the barn.

Bridger stares at him then inclines his head toward the 2nd cop, who stands open-mouthed.

BRIDGER
Get to the barn!

The 2nd cop darts off. Bridger turns to Alden.

BRIDGER
So you know all this shit because your daughter told you so, right?, Your daughter--who put up a million bucks to bail this psycho out.

ALDEN
Right.

BRIDGER
I don't know what's going on here...but I know you made an asshole out of me so that Randall and your daughter could get away. And I know I'm going to see you pay for it.

ALDEN
(it is such and empty threat)
Well...don't be too hard on me. I knew Swinton was dead and I knew that he was the killer and so will you as soon as George can talk. I also know that material witnesses can languish in jail and victims can be hounded by the police and the press.
(he smiles, gently)
You see, Detective Bridger, I hail from a small town in New Hampshire, the "Granite State", Home state of Horace Greeley and Daniel Webster, if those names mean something to you. And we have a motto in New Hampshire: "Live Free Or Die."

WOL5048

BRIDGER
Well, we have a motto in New York. "Run out on a murder case and you better keep running for the rest of your life because if we catch you we'll put you in jail for contempt." Does your daughter know that?

ALDEN
Probably. She probably prefers it that way. She's always been wild.

INT. RIZZOLI'S BOOKS - NIGHT

The shop is closed for a publication party and the room is jammed with literati: Nick and Nora, Mailer and MacInerney, John Patrick Shanley and Bret Easton Ellis...

Celebrants eat strips of barbecued chicken, and talk about how awful the food is, how awful the latest books are, how profoundly they've been screwed by their publisher.

The book, stacked in ziggurats around the room, is Mozart In Paris.

ROY, as slender and cheerful as ever (perhaps a little more slender, a little less cheerful) makes his way among the guests.

ROY
Good to see you... Peter, glad you could come... Tom, I read "My Mother's Agony". It was hilarious. ... Marvin, I hear you signed with us today, we're ecstatic about having you...

A MAN
How the hell do you get all the writers? What do you give them?

ROY
Anything they want.

He reaches the front of the room, Maude stops him.

MAUDE
Have you heard anything from Will?
(Roy shakes his head)
But this is dreadful. I don't understand. He was exonerated, why doesn't he come back?

ROY
Oh. he will, Maude. It's only a matter of time. He can't stay away from this.
(he gestures at the room)
This is his world.

EXT. HI-ANGLE - A FJORD, A HEAVY FOREST

...we are so high that we see the breathtaking panorama in sweeps of color. Yellow and pink flowers blooming out of white patches of melting snow. Swatches of dark green, ribbons of blue...

SUPER UP:

LABRADOR, NEWFOUNDLAND

The CAMERA continues to pan until it picks up...

ALDEN'S CABIN

Clearly abandoned. A few stripped caribou bones on the ground. And like some metal monster, a chopper, sitting about 30 yards away, rotors still frozen from winter and beginning to rust. the body slightly tilted, as if from winter storms.

And sitting next to it, perched lightly on the grass, a new helicopter, it's bright body shining in the sun.

The pilot stands by the door, looking toward the house, glancing at his watch until, finally, the door of the cabin opens and Alden walks out.

PILOT
(to Alden)
Anyone in there?
(Alden shakes his head)
There never is.

ALDEN
No. There never is.

WOL5048

He walks back to the chopper and the young pilot carefully helps him in, then climbs in beside him.

As the chopper rises, we pan off it back to the cabin, back to the woods, in toward the thick black trunk of a tree. Two pair of eyes stare out from behind it, not quite feral, not quite human, forever free or forever trapped in the body of a wolf.